

THE PROPHETIC VOICE: AN AGENT FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

Henry I. Hargrow, Jr., D. Min.

B.S., Rust College, 1985  
M. Div., Memphis Theological Seminary, 1995

Mentor  
The Rev. Sam Mann, D. Min.

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# **ABSTRACT**

## **THE PROPHETIC VOICE: AN AGENT FOR SOCIAL CHANCE**

by

Henry I. Hargrow, Jr.

United Theological Seminary, 2006

Mentor

Sam Mann, D. Min.

The objective is to demonstrate and to create through the preached word and consciousness raising activities a model for ministry and an environment whereby Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church will become a change agent within the community of Tunica County, Mississippi, following the walk of Jesus.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I have a host of people to whom I give thanks and appreciation. I want to acknowledge Sam Mann for his wisdom and guidance. John Mendez and Jackie Baston helped me to appreciate and to hear the voices of the past. Barbara Morgan helped with sisterly advice. I want to acknowledge the memories of my great-grandmother, Maggie Irons, grandmother, Carrie Stewart, and great-aunt Lettie Pulliam who all gave me love, support and encouragement. I still hear your voices speaking to me. I am grateful for my mother, Queen Ester Hargrow who continues to give so much to others. Special thanks and appreciation go to Rose Ollie Howard, Anthony Singleton and LaVern Jones. I am grateful for the privilege of serving the congregation of Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church, Tunica County, Mississippi.

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my wife, Janet Ollie Hargrow, and our children, Daniel Greer, Shatora Reese and Isaac Chase Hargrow.

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## INTRODUCTION

This writer has known the sting of racism for a long time. It was a way of life for him growing up in the Mississippi Delta. Race was an issue then, and race is an issue now. He struggled then and struggle now to understand the lasting effect racism has had on the African American community and the black church.

The norm was to treat African Americans unfairly. Caucasian Americans had their churches and community activities, and African Americans had theirs.

The black church was the one place where this writer could find identity and acceptance. The issue of race was not discussed in the sermons of his youth. The one thing that he remembers most about the sermons was that God was on the side of the oppressed and the poor. Early in life this writer understood that God had a special calling on his life.

Through the years, the black church in Tunica County, Mississippi has not changed since the days of slavery. In our community the black church was the gathering place for the wounded, downtrodden, oppressed and the outcast segment of society. The motto was, "Whosoever will let them come." It was once the consciousness for America. The preachers of the black church that declared the social gospel and helped create social change. The best way to get the black community involved is through the black church. The black church can become that voice of consciousness again because of the moral fiber in its worth. This prophetic word can be found in the black church.

With the spiritual calling in mind, this writer entered the focus group "Reframing the Dialogue on Racism in America", in August 2003. The following pages will present a

model of ministry that focuses on the prophetic voice and how the prophetic voice can become an agent for social change.

Chapter one presents Ministry Focus. This writer will share his beginning of growing up in the racist south and his early days in and around the church.

Chapter two presents the State of The Art in this Ministry Project. This section will present some of the most interesting works this writer has encountered during this research.

Chapter three presents the Theoretical Foundation and Review of Literature. This section will highlight some of the historical foundations of the black church and the role of the black preacher in America. This section will also include the biblical, theological and historical foundation.

Chapter four presents the Methodology and the design of the model. This section presents the writer research methodology and tools that were used to test his finding.

Chapter five presents the Project and Field Experience. This describes the efforts of this writer to put the project into action. This also includes any reaction and comments from the members of Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church.

Chapter six presents Reflection, Summary and Conclusion of the project. Included in the appendix section is a series of prophetic-inspirational sermons that were preached during the project and copies of questionnaires, sermon response surveys and community leaders' interviews, and flyer.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **MINISTRY FOCUS**

The one thing this writer remembers most about his childhood is the church. It was as if the church was his second home.

This writer was born in Robinsonville, Mississippi, on August 11, 1962. It was a time in history when the civil rights movement was in full swing. The home that he was born in was a “sharecropper home”. His father worked for the landowner as a farm hand. It was a general rule that as long as a hired hand worked on the farm, he or she could stay on that farm free of charge. When one considers the pay system in working on a farm in Mississippi, they understand that free housing was impossible. It was a provision of “free” housing a way to keep wages low. Somebody paid for it.

This writer’s childhood for the most part was a happy one. The family never went without food, clothing or shelter. If our family was poor, he did not know it. Our parents took care of us and openly talked about how God supplied our every need. God was the center of all the things that went on in our lives. Attending church was not an option but a must.

Music was often heard in our home. This writer listened intensely to gospel music and the blues. Gospel music gave this writer hope about the future regardless of his present situation. The blues words spoke of the sadness and despair of the present situation. Church and music was the dialogue in the African American community that taught us survival. This writer realized at an early age that if he allowed his mind to focus

on all bad things, the blues life would not be worth living.

This writer's mother took pride in saying that she never had to go on welfare to take care of her children, "God always made a way." This faith was passed down from his maternal great-grandparents, John and Maggie Irons, who had three children: one son, Louis, and two daughters, Ollie and Carrie. A story was passed down in our family about his great-grandfather, John Irons. During the depression era, John Irons was the one farmer, black or white who fed many families. John Irons' family never went hungry and always had something to help others. Mr. Irons had a strong belief in family. This writer's great-grandmother, Maggie, was the rock of our family. This writer remembers Maggie sharing with him the importance of family. She took it upon herself to nurture her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. As a youth, this writer was always excited to visit Maggie's home in the country. Great grandmother Maggie often spoke kind words concerning her church and her pastor. She was a dedicated mother of the church until she died. It was her praying that led this writer in seeking a personal relationship with Jesus. She was very open about her faith in God. The way Maggie prayed expressed to all who were listening that she had a strong belief in Jesus.

Carrie Irons was this writer's grandmother, and Maggie's youngest child. Carrie had four children: Leroy, Emma, and twins Sylvester and Queen Ester. During the 1950s, Carrie migrated to Chicago, Illinois, looking for better wages and opportunities. She decided to leave her twins in the care of her mother, Maggie. Even though Carrie lived far away, she made it a practice to keep in touch with her children. As the family grew larger and older, Carrie would make her annual visit bearing gifts for all. She was one of the most loving grandmothers any child could have. Two days before Carrie died, this

writer prayed that God would allow his grandmother more time to live. She called out to him and said “Don’t worry about me, I’m fixed up and ready to go home.” Those words were powerful and taught this writer more about her faith in God.

This writer’s mother is the youngest in her family. She was the apple of great-grandmother Maggie’s eyes. His mother has the same strengths that Maggie possessed. When Maggie died, the mantle of the matriarch of the family was passed to his mother. She is a true survivor. Over the years, she has endured sickness, abuse, disappointment, hardship and death of loved ones. Even as a child, this writer mother seemed to know how to make good sweet lemonade out of sour lemons. She has served her church as secretary and church usher for over 35 years. To this very day, mother’s faith in God is evident in her living.

After high school, mother married this writer’s father, Henry I. Hargrow. The only formal education that he had was completing the third grade. Father was blessed by advancement in his employment wherever he went regardless of the race factor. This writer’s father came from a large family. He was born the fourth child of twelve children and raised in Panola County, Alabama. His family moved from Alabama to Robinsonville, Mississippi, in the late 1940s, looking for better opportunities. Many times father shared with us his first hand experience of dealing with racism. It was very difficult for his parents in Alabama and Mississippi but that didn’t stop father from wanting more in his life. He fought the demon of racism by trying to improve himself. It was in the church as a gospel singer that father found his voice.

Father would often tell us about how the white man never wanted the black people to advance, be it socially, economically, or mentally. It was his experience that

“the white man” could never treat a black person like a human being. He would say that “white folk aren’t right in Mississippi, none of them, but God will fix it one day”.

As a child, church was a very important part of our family life. It was our home away from home. Early in life, this writer felt some closeness to God. He decided to accept Jesus into my heart as his personal Savior at the age of eleven. This writer was baptized into the church that he now pastor. Somehow this writer knew that God wanted him to do a job and he was willing, but didn’t know what it was.

At the age of six, this writer became aware of the pain of racism in his community. This writer’s parents drove the family to Memphis which was about 30 miles north of our home town. It was right after the death of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in Memphis. This writer remembers asking his mother many questions concerning the life and death of Dr. King. This writer’s mother said that Dr. King was in Memphis to help the black employees of the sanitation department get better working conditions and better wages. It was hard to understand why people were treated differently simple because of race and hate. This writer began to ask his mother many questions concerning the race issue, but she could not answer them. She instructed him to seek God for the answer.

This writer would ask why God allows this to happen. This writer mother’s reply was, “Baby, you need to ask God that question.” For a long time the questions of justice and equality has lingered in his mind. Even during those times of questioning, I felt a close relationship to God. As the years passed, we became more aware of the plight of African Americans in Tunica County. This writer was living in what W.E.B. Dubois called “two societies,” one black and one white. He was very much aware of the racial unrest in America. In the midst of this social plague in America things began to change

everywhere but Tunica County, Mississippi.

The fight was for all people to be treated with dignity and respect. Blacks were treated unfairly in this world, and it seemed to be the norm for them to be treated as less than human.

The church was the safe haven for many. During elementary and high school this writer was very much involved in the activities of the church. The church was the one place where he felt comfortable.

After graduating from high school, he attended Rust College in Holly Springs, Mississippi. While at Rust College, he participated in the gospel choir and Student Senate. This experience helped shape his position on justice. It was at that time in his life he felt a need for a more diverse setting. He chose to leave Rust College after one year and transfer to DePaul University in Chicago, Illinois.

While at DePaul University, he encountered his first face-to-face battle with racism. It came in the form of a white political science instructor. One day in class, the instructor said he needed to speak with this writer after class. The words of the instructor were, "I just don't think you belong in college, I think you need to consider leaving school and doing something else." This writer's heart was broken. It was not the statement that the instructor made but how the instructor said it. This writer was kind and said to the professor, "Thank you." It was something that this writer cannot explain to this day. Anger rose up in him and he wanted to lash out, but another part of him did not know what to do. He felt like a victim because of his skin color.

It was in the church that this writer felt a sense of security. This writer felt that if he moved from the state of Mississippi, things would get better. He was a naïve nineteen

year-old child who needed to grow up and become a man, fast. This pain of racism followed him to Chicago, Illinois. The only peace that he could find was in God.

Somewhere deep within his being he knew he had to do something. This writer had the drive to finish college regardless of who said he could not. He was living with relatives who neither shared nor supported his idea of education; therefore, making the decision to leave was not very difficult. It was not their dream. They believed a high school education meant one was highly educated and anything beyond could possible make a person an educated fool.

This writer's parents could not afford to finance his college education so he finished the semester and joined the Army Reserve. After basic and advance training in South Carolina, he returned to Holly Spring, Mississippi, to finish his degree at Rust College.

Upon completing his military tour in the Army Reserve, this writer moved to Memphis, Tennessee. It was very important to him that he find a church home. This writer was yearning to hear direction from God. It was like a thirst that needed to be quenched. This writer did not just want to attend any church; he was in need of fellowship with real believers. He wanted a place that would help make meaning out of life.

New Fellowship Baptist Church welcomed this writer as a member. This church had a membership of about thirty people. The pastor was a dynamic person who seemed to speak words sent directly from God. Hearing the word of God, loud and clear from the mouth of Dr. Alan V. Ragland, was an electrifying experience. This was the first time in the writer's adult life that he heard excitement and joy from a preacher concerning the



gospel. Dr. Ragland had a way of bringing life to the word. His sermons were not the “pie-in-the-sky” sermons of this writer’s youth, but sermons which spoke of involvement in social issues. This form of preaching and teaching gave this writer respect for the black preacher and a better understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

While growing up in Tunica County, Mississippi, this writer never heard anything about Jesus and social issues. This type of teachings was new to him. This writer was always led to believe that the place of the pastor was to stand directly behind the pulpit and not to get involved with issues of the world. It was understood that the preacher should never mix politics with religion. After meeting and listening to Alan Ragland, the gospel came alive and fresh.

While at New Fellowship, this writer became involved with Bible study and Sunday School. In his heart he believed that God was calling him to do the work of a teacher. Dr. Ragland advised the writer to read and reread Proverb 3:5, 6 *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him and he will make straight your paths.” NRSV*

After much prayer and guidance, this writer accepted the call to preach the gospel and to continue his studies at the Memphis Theological Seminary. On Sunday, September 19, 1992, this writer was ordained a preacher of the gospel in the Baptist church. This writer’s interests in ministry and social issues led him to Youth Villages, a residential treatment facility in Memphis, Tennessee. Many opportunities to share the gospel of Jesus Christ were available during his employment at Youth Villages. While employed with Youth Villages, he became interim pastor of New Fellowship Baptist Church. After six months in that position, he moved his membership to Mt. Vernon Baptist Church in

Memphis, Tennessee, under the leadership of Dr. James L. Netters, Sr. Mt. Vernon Baptist Church had a strong active voice in the Memphis community. While at Mt. Vernon Baptist Church, this writer served as an assistant to the senior pastor and Children Church Pastor.

In March 1997, this writer was offered employment with Tunica County as the Housing Director. He was motivated to return to the Tunica community because of finance and the promise from political leaders that change had taken place. After a period of three years the pain of racism from his childhood resurfaced. This writer saw the leadership of the community silencing the voice of the individual that voted them into office.

In January 1999, there was a pull from the Holy Spirit on this writer's heart to resign the position of Children Church Pastor at Mt. Vernon and to start E. L. P.'s (Empowering the Lord's People for Service) ministries in Robinsonville, Mississippi. The purpose of this ministry was to assist in the lives of the homeless, downtrodden and helpless citizens of Tunica County through action.

## Context

This writer's context is Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church, a rural church in Northern Mississippi. Mt. Olive was founded in January of 1948 and is an affiliate of the Mississippi State Baptist Convention and the National Baptist Convention. The church was started as a plantation church and the sharecroppers system. The plantation owners control the people, land, and the church. This system of sharecropping, allowed the poor, mostly African American farmers to work a piece of the plantation owner's land in exchange for a share of the crop as payment. In practice, it was a system of debt slavery that combined segregation and brutal force to keep the black population poor and powerless. This system of powerlessness and hopelessness spilled over into the church environment.

The late Fannie Lou Hamer once said about this sharecropper system, "Sometimes I be working in the fields and I get so tired, I say to the people picking cotton with us. Hard as we have to work for nothing, there must be some way we can change this."<sup>1</sup> From this writer's own experience of working in the cotton fields of Mississippi, he knew it was hard labor with very little pay. Ms. Hamer was a civil rights worker from the Delta area of Mississippi. As a young adult, reading about Ms. Hamer touched his life by her belief in God and her strong activism. She fought for justice and fair treatment for African Americans in the Delta. "The only thing that they could do to me was to kill me, and it seems like they'd been trying to do that a little bit at a time ever

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<sup>1</sup> Neil McMillen. *An Oral History with Fannie Lou Hamer* (U. of Southern Mississippi, April 14, 1972), Available <<http://www.lib.usm.edu/~spco/crda/oh/hamer.htm?hamertrans.htm~mainframe>> accessed 6 June 2006.

since I could remember.”<sup>2</sup>

Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church, like many churches in the Delta, served a dual purpose in the community. It was a school and a church. The name of the school was Indian Creek School, which closed in the late 1950s. Records of the actual date were kept, but later burned and destroyed by an angry member who was accused of using the church finances for personal use. In the early fifties, some members of Mt. Olive jumped on the mighty migration train and traveled north looking for new opportunities and better wages. Leaving the community was the only hope for better living standards that many African Americans in Tunica County had. Moving north to cities such as Chicago and Detroit gave the promise of a better wage and a more secure future.

Yet, despite low attendance, many members of Mt. Olive remained faithful. Mt. Olive had a circuit preacher/pastor who only preached one Sunday out of the month at the church. It was a norm for the pastor at that time to have at least two congregations. As the years passed, Mt. Olive survived many ups and downs. The deacons sought ownership of the deed of the church from the landowner by taking the owner to court. After fighting the white landowner in court for rights of ownership to the church property, the leadership was awarded the deed in 1994.

In the early 1990s, Tunica County, Mississippi, had the distinction of being known as “America’s Ethiopia”. Poor education, healthcare, housing, low economic stability, and high unemployment were the issues of the day. According to the U.S. Census Report of 1990, Tunica County had a population of “8,164.” It had only one major manufacture and much farm land. Cotton was its biggest commodity. All of the other employment opportunities were outside the community. Pictures were taken of

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

these deplorable conditions and sent all over the world. It gave the viewer a notion that this plight was a modern day holocaust for African Americans in Mississippi. One particular area that was given the most attention was known as “Sugar Ditch.”

After much publicity from the media, thirteen years later, the area once known as Sugar Ditch is now covered with concrete. The row of plantation type houses has been replaced by apartments for the elderly. In 1992-1993, the county had an operational budget of three million, which has grown in the recent fiscal year 2003-2004 to sixty nine million as a result revenues from the casino industry.

On May 21, 2000, this writer was called to pastor the Mt. Olive Baptist Church. Currently this congregation is made up of twelve families with a total membership of forty-five. In the last three years, Mt. Olive has made great strides in taking the church to a level of community involvement.

Just a few feet from the church this writer chopped cotton as a child. During the days in the field it was so hot he could see the waves of heat reflect off the cotton as moving shadows before his very eyes. He prayed daily for God to move him out of that painful experience. This writer made a vow during those times that if he ever moved from Tunica County, Mississippi, he would never return. That vow did not stick because today he is leading Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church in Tunica County, Mississippi.

“In the New Testament the church is the community that has received the Holy Spirit and is now ready to do what is necessary to live out the gospel. It is the assembly of those who have experienced what that means for humanity, they cannot accept the world as it is. They must rebel against evil so all citizens may know that they do not have to

behave according to unjust societal laws.”<sup>3</sup> Where is the church in the midst of this dreadful disease of racism that continues to rob us and kill us? What should the preacher preach when he/she sees injustice of racism in Tunica County? Cone writes in *A Black Theology of Liberation*, “The black community spends most of its time trying to make a living in a society labeled for whites only. Therefore, the central question for blacks is how are we going to survive in a world which deems black humanity an illegitimate form of human existence?”<sup>4</sup>

This writer believes that God has guided him back to Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church for the purpose of leading the congregation into social activism in order that the church has a voice in the process of change. Leading his home church has at times been very difficult. This writer’s faith continues to increase as he takes on the challenges of being a pastor. He takes on the responsibilities of sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ in Tunica County, Mississippi with the satisfaction of knowing that he is in the will of God.

For many in our society, it would be easy to say the problem of race is over. However, as an African American male it is a part of my everyday life in the community of Tunica County.

Before entering this focus group, this writer had not decided on the area of interest for his ministerial doctoral studies. The decision came to him in the voice of Dr. William A. Jones of Bethel Baptist Church in Brooklyn, New York. Dr. Jones was the guest lecturer during his first intensive at United Theological in Dayton, Ohio. This tall

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<sup>3</sup> James Cone, *A Black Theology* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Book, 1990), 130.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 11.

giant of a preacher spoke with a powerful command in his delivery as he talked about “*What we preach.*” After the lecture was over the open dialogue began. A fellow student stood and asked Dr. Jones a question concerning white privilege. The student asked, “Many whites do not consider themselves a race. How can we begin to make race relations better? ” Dr. Jones replied, “Are you willing to die?”<sup>5</sup> After hearing that response and listening to Dr. Sam Mann converse about the issue of Reframing the Dialogue on Racism in America, this writer recognized that God led him to United Theological Seminary for the purpose of joining this group. After that plenary session his heart pulsed with many questions concerning the demise of racism in America.

This writer asked himself many questions: Will he be willing to die for this fight against racism? Does he believe in a God that is powerful enough to eradicate racism, classism and sexism? Will he be willing to stand against the norm because of justice? He answered all those question with a yes. This writer considers the acceptance of this call as a part of the responsibility of leadership. The call to share the gospel of Jesus Christ is a call to action. It is a call to speak for the oppressed, the poor and the downtrodden. This call of God can at times become cumbersome, but it is gratifying.

In the community in which this writer serves opposing racism is a never ending fight. Though things are getting better this fight for justice continues.

Reframing the dialogue on racism in America, “in theory was to deconstruct integration, inclusively, and diversity”<sup>6</sup>. The focus of this group was to train white

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<sup>5</sup> Dialogue between Dr. William A. Jones and students. United Theology Seminary during Doctoral Intensive Program, August 2003.

<sup>6</sup> John S. Paddock, *Reframing The Dialogue on Racism in America In A Parish Setting*. D Min. diss., Dayton: United Theological Seminary, 2004.

ministers to address the issues of white supremacy, privilege and its effect on racism. This group is important to the African American community because it examines the issue of racism and the effect racism has had on internal oppression within the black church.

Howard Thurman, In *Jesus and the Disinherited*, writes "... to those who need profound succor and strength to enable them to live in the present with dignity and creativity, Christianity often has been sterile and of little avail. The conventional Christian word is muffled, confused, and vague."<sup>7</sup> Many traditional African Americans seek comfort in their belief of a better world in the hereafter, while others are looking for justice on this side of heaven.

Through the years, faith in God has sustained many African Americans. Hope is present in the black church. A simple belief that "it's going to be alright" keeps the African American people moving forward. As a youth, this writer was taught that as believers in Christ, Christians did not get involved with issues of social justice and equality. That was the responsibility of God. Sermons were preached concerning obedience and accepting the way things were. As a youth, he never saw or heard of any local church leaders getting involved in social protest.

This writer always felt and believed that God was present in his situation. God saw the injustices of people and was not pleased, but it seemed as if nobody was speaking against this evil. Howard Thurman says, "Armed resistance is apt to be a tragic last resort in the life of the disinherited. Armed resistance has an appeal because it provides a form of expression, of activity, that releases tension and frees the oppressed from a

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<sup>7</sup> Howard Thurman, *Jesus and the Disinherited* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1976), 11.



disintegrating sense of complete impotency and helplessness.”<sup>8</sup>

God is concerned with justice and equality for all people. The love of God for humankind was presented in the body of Jesus. The church is the place where we learn that by reading the scriptures one can discover that it was Jesus who embodied justice and mercy. Though the church exists in the community, the church should be the voice of God in leading the community to justice, mercy and peace. In a world that is filled with so much hate and greed the church must speak. According to the Bible, those called of God have a mandate to shout out loud the words found in the book of Amos 5:24, “*but let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!*”

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 26.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE STATE OF THE ART IN THIS MINISTRY MODEL

Black preaching is a phenomenon. It encompasses all garments of society including the church and the world. Black preaching is a gift only God can give. Black preaching is an art form that has stirred the emotion and spirit of many. This social phenomenon has helped in the case of social activism and is the foundation upon which people become change agents in society.

This gift of preaching is used to speak prophetically to a people in the midst of hardship, trouble and pain. It is the voice of liberation for a people who need to be set free. Black preaching is the prophetic response to “*Is there is a word from the Lord?*”

There is a wealth of literature on preaching in the black church including works by Samuel D. Proctor, H. Beecher Hicks, Jr. and Amos Jones on ways to craft a sermon. However, the content of this research expresses what is being preached in the sermons of the African American preacher that would cause a people to become socially active within the community. It seeks out sermons written by slave preachers such as John Jasper and Nat Turner. The social and economic justice preached by Father Devine, Fred Shuttlesworth and Jesse Jackson parallel the research preparation, which led to the examination of sermons by Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X. This would include the multimillion dollar messages of today now marketed in mega-churches run by Eddie Long, Creflo Dollar, T.D. Jakes and others.

As this researcher sought to understand the prophetic voice as a liberator, one of the most prolific writers that surfaced in the area of black theology was James Cone. Mr. Cone maintained that “Christian theology is a theology of liberation. It is a rational study of the being of God in the world in light of the existential situation of an oppressed community, relating the forces of liberation to the essence of the gospel, which is Jesus Christ.”<sup>1</sup> This thought gives meaning to the word “Christian” in the African America community. To know and believe Jesus Christ embodies the message of hope, for the African American gives credence to the understanding of one’s faith. Cone suggested “to speak of black theology as survival theology refers to the condition of the community out of which black theology arises. We can delineate three characteristics of the black condition: the tension between life and death, identity crisis, and white social and political power.”<sup>2</sup> The black preacher is best suited to present this message of hope to the masses.

Black preachers are one of the most underrated groups in the United States today because of their gift of oratorical style. The sermon itself could very well be filled with tools for survival in both the sacred and the secular world. The sermon styles of preachers such as Charles G. Adams, Jeremiah Wright, Gardner Taylor, Claudette Copeland, Barbara Amos, Vashti Murphy McKenzie, Alan Ragland, Reginald Porter, James Netters, create a strong message of hope and survival that is found in the African American community.

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<sup>1</sup> Cone, *A Black Theology*, 1.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 10-11.

Content style is the keys to the power of the prophetic message across. The congregational response is the best way to judge the effectiveness of the preacher in the African American church.

This ministry model focus of how the prophetic voice speaks to the whole person, mind, body and spirit. Black preaching encompasses the entire human experience.

The black preacher in the black church has traditionally been the voice of consciousness in America. This voice speaks to the oppressed as well as the oppressor. It speaks to the oppressor with power, authority and declaration about matters concerning the poor and downtrodden. In addition, it speaks to the oppressed with power, authority and declaration about matters concerning liberty, freedom and justice.

The black church shares the gospel of Jesus Christ as the great liberator in the struggle for political, social and economic justice in the world. The task of the black church and its leader is to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with people in making meaning out of life in a world that is racist and oppressive. W.E. B. DuBois in *The Souls of Black Folk* writes, “After the Egyptian and Indian, the Greek and Roman, the Teuton and Mongolian, The Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world, a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity.”<sup>3</sup>

Out of all the struggles and hardships African Americans have endured over time, no person could understand the drive behind a theology of liberation except another

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<sup>3</sup> W. E. B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York, NY: Fawcett Publication, 1961), 3.

African American. Within the confines of this struggle is the demon of internal oppression.

For a better understanding of internal oppression, one should consult the writing of Paulo Freire. Freire explained, “During the initial stage of the struggle, the oppressed, instead of striving for liberation, tend themselves to become oppressors, or ‘sub-oppressors.’ The very structure of their thought has been conditioned by the contradictions of the concrete, existential situation by which they were shaped. Their ideal is to be men; but for them, to be men is to be oppressors.”<sup>4</sup> The oppressed could be aware they are downtrodden “but their perception of themselves as oppressed is impaired by their submersion in the reality of oppression.”<sup>5</sup>

Any reflection on the meaning of God, human existence, and freedom concerning the African American must come from an African American theologian. Folk religion is a constituent factor in every significant crisis in the black community. “When the black community is relatively integrated with white society, the folk religious elements recede from black institutions to form a hard core of unassimilable nationalism in the interstices of the social system-biding its time. When the black community is hard-pressed by poverty and oppression, when hopes are crushed under the heels of resurgent racism, then essential folk elements exhibit themselves and begin once again to infiltrate the power centers that ignored or neglected them.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York, NY: The Continuum International Publishing Group, 1993), 45.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Gayraud S. Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism* (New York, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 235.

There are three authors who can help to celebrate the power and the authority in the black pulpit: Cleophus LaRue, *The Heart of Black Preaching*, Frank Thomas, *They Like to Never Quit Praisin' God*, and Evans Crawford, *The Hum: Call and Response in African American Preaching*. These and many other African American authors assisted to shape this researcher's understanding of purpose and power in the call to the gospel ministry. Reading and reflecting on these authors' work brought excitement concerning "*What we preach*" when the journey became tedious.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

The black church was the first place that this writer heard about the Holy Spirit through the voice of the black preacher. This church has always been the writer's second home. It is a great part of who he is. In the church one could often hear a message of hope and encouragement put to song and preached with excitement. The church was the place where, when a person stood before the congregation and prayed, the presence of the Holy Spirit dwelled. The black church and its preacher transformed the consciousness of a people to become change agents in a community of believers. It is this church and its faith that continues to be the survival tool for a race of people.

#### Historical Foundation

When the African American preachers were given the opportunity to use the gift that God had given them, they spoke with power. In the early days during the development of religious freedom in America, African Americans became important in the church. Carter G. Woodson in *The History of the Black Church*, states that "the Methodist, Baptist and Presbyterians became imbued with the idea of equality for the slaves in the church although they did not always militantly denounce slavery. They were accepted but when exhibiting the power of expounding the scripture, people began to listen. In those cases in which slaves were permitted to preach, they found themselves confronting not only the opposition of the more aristocratic sects but

violating laws of long standing, that prohibit slaves ministers from exercising their gifts.”<sup>1</sup> If the sermon didn’t move anyone to change and people were not stirred, then there wasn’t much attention paid.

The black preacher understood the power of the spirit, but didn’t speak open exhortation. In the midst of preaching, the worshippers carried on a dialogue with the preacher. “The highlight of the service was to worship and glorify God by achieving the experience of mass catharsis; a purifying explosion of emotions that eclipses the harshness of reality for a season and leaves both the preacher and the congregation drained in a moment of spiritual ecstasy.”<sup>2</sup>

Peter Paris writes in *The Social Teaching of the Black Churches*, that many “slaves responded to their situation by running away whenever they had the opportunity, and although others rebelled in various ways, the vast majority had no other choice than to learn how to cope with their predicament. Like all entrapped human beings, they desired freedom-a place wherein they could make their own decisions and determine their own destinies. In other words, they longed for a place of refuge from racism which, for them, was and continues to be the paramount social evil.”<sup>3</sup>

The church was the only place where the slaves could go and find some sense of freedom. In this church they could pray, sing and preach. The problem was getting the masters to approve the meeting. These acts were skillfully planned. “During the last quarter of the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century, blacks were able to found independent

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<sup>1</sup> Carter G. Woodson, *History of the Negro Church* (Washington, D.C.: Associate Publishers Inc., 1992), 36.

<sup>2</sup> C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990), 6.

<sup>3</sup> Peter J. Paris, *The Social Teaching of the Black Churches* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1985), 5.



churches.”<sup>4</sup> These slaves believed and perceived that the gospel of Jesus Christ was a distortion by the white church. There was a need for African Americans to affirm their own humanity in the light of a nonracist appropriation of the Christian message.

“Most slaves, repelled by the brand of religion their masters taught, the racial inequalities in white churches and the limitations on the bondsmen’s autonomy, formulated new ideas and practices in the quarters. The true shepherd of the black flock was the slave preacher. Often one of few slaves who could read, the black preacher was usually highly intelligent, resourceful, and noted for his powerful imagination and memory.”<sup>5</sup> The slave preachers experience of suffering and tribulations like other slaves gave authoritative voice to the preacher as a counselor and arbiter. The preacher, like many preachers today in the African American community had a remarkable personality, character and the traits to unify people. He was able to console, uplift and inspire. “The black preacher had special oratorical skills and was master of the vivid phrase, folk poetry, and picturesque words. Described by many white observers as ‘rude eloquence and genuine oratory,’ the sermons of black preachers excited the emotions.”<sup>6</sup>

Historically, the black church was the institutional center of the African American community, and it had many functions. The black church was the basic source of religious and moral values. It has been diligent in protecting the community from the abuses of racism by comforting the wounded, restoring dignity to the demoralized, hope to the despairing, and redirection to those bent on harboring attitudes of bitterness and hatred. “While the social control

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 5-6.

<sup>5</sup> John W. Blessingame, *The Slave Community-Plantation Life in the Antebellum South* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1972), 130.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 131.

aspects of Christianity were quite effective when intermeshed with other constraints such as laws, illiteracy, and an omnipresent threat of extermination, religion became the only institutional area where the slaves also exercised a measure of freedom.”<sup>7</sup> The black church was the place to gather and discuss, to devise and implement, and the place to form protests against racial injustices. The civil rights organization grew out of the black church. “The preacher held great power in his hands when he stood before his people. His lineal relationship to the shaman, the witch doctor, and the other religious specialists, who communed with the nature spirits and the ancestors on the banks of the Nile and the Congo, made him deeply sensitive to the mysteriousness of faith and its capacity to take possession of persons and drive them into frenzy. The black preacher had special oratorical skills and was master of the vivid phrase, folk poetry, and picturesque words.”<sup>8</sup>

During this slavery period some black ministers preached compliance with the plantation owners because of fear of flogging. “Others did so because the whites rewarded them with money, relief from labor, or manumission. . . . Sometimes obsequious to a fault, a few black preachers so valued the rewards and the marks of respect they received from whites they occasionally voluntarily advised the slaves to be content with their lot in life.”<sup>9</sup> This tradition of obedience lingers today in our churches. The slaves were taught that a duty as a Christian to travel the path of safety, which was obedience. The black preacher taught the slaves that as long as it appeared to be the will of the Lord, they should be contented with where they were.

Because of fear some slaves adopted protective measures in their churches for freedom to

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<sup>7</sup> Lincoln and Mamiya, *The Black Church*, 200.

<sup>8</sup> Blessingame, *The Slave Community*, 131.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

worship. The affairs in the quarters concerning any religious societies were held in secret. “The Reverend Charles C. Jones asserted in 1842 that slave members of the same church are sacredly bound by their religion not to reveal each others’ sins, for that would be backbiting and injuring the brotherhood.”<sup>10</sup> Missionaries reported that it was a rule among the members of these societies never to divulge the secrets of stealing; if so, dire punishment would be brought upon the informer.

The slave’s religious principles were colored by the slave own longings for freedom and based on half-understood sermons in white churches or passages from the Old Testament describing the struggles of the Jews, beautiful pictures of a future life, enchantment and fear, and condemnation of sin. The heaviest emphasis in the slaves’ religion was on change in their earthly institution and divine retribution for the cruelty of their masters. When the black preacher who exhibited this unusual power preached with the force and authority of the Holy Spirit, steps were taken to silence that preacher as in the case of Nat Turner, Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X and many others.

Phillip A. Bruce, in *The Plantation Negro as a Freeman*, says that “the preachers of the Negroes are their most active politicians, as a rule, but even when they are not they had much political influence.”<sup>11</sup> The preachers constituted the natural leaders of the race. It was the preachers who were elevated to the clerical positions. It was not because they had any greater holiness of life or eloquence of tongue but because they had more energy and decision of character. “Each one brings these qualifications to bear on all occasions of public agitation from

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 133.

<sup>11</sup> Phillip A. Bruce, *The Plantation Negro as a Freeman* (New York, NY: Putnam, 1889), 73.

that conspicuous coigne of vantage, his pulpit, which thus becomes a rostrum, the religious doctrine enunciated from thence, taking the color of his political principles, just as, on the other hand, his political harangues have a religious echo.”<sup>12</sup>

“It was from within an African religious framework that the slaves made adjustments to Christianity after hearing the gospel. The influences of the African religious past extended into their new life, first in the Caribbean and later in the United States and, far from being completely obliterated, were reshaped by the circumstance of enslavement. Slavery, as a matter of fact, only served to drive those influence from the past beneath the surface by force and terror. But instead of decaying there, the African elements were enhanced and strengthened in the subterranean vaults of the unconscious from whence they arose-time and time again during moments of greatest adversity and repression-to subvert the attempt to make the slave an emasculated, depersonalized version of the white person.”<sup>13</sup>

As the slaves became discontented with what was taught concerning religion, a revolution began, as in the case of Nat Turner. “Turner, like others whose names are buried under the debris of the citadel of Americans slavery, discovered that the God of the Bible demanded justice, and to know him and his Son Jesus Christ was to be set free from every power that dehumanizes and oppresses. Turner discovered his manhood in the conception of the Christian God as one who liberates.”<sup>14</sup> Many black preachers were forced off the plantation because the white landowner did not like what was being preached. The white landowners saw many African Americans rebelling against the rules because of what they heard in the worship services.

As with the civil rights preacher, “the otherworldliness of slave preaching was an interim strategy. It was the deliberate choice of the preacher to give the people something to which they

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Wilmore, *Black Religion*, 27.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 64.

could attach their emotions. The preacher needed something to substitute for the immediate, uncontrollable, and probably ill-fated decision to strike, then and there, for freedom. He, therefore, gave relief from the tragedy of slavery, a modicum of comfort in the presence of the overwhelming reality of defeat and despair.”<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 28.

## Biblical Foundation

In the Baptist Church the chief officer of the church is the pastor. “This is a person called of God to preach the gospel, who has first been licensed or liberated by his/her church to preach, who, after he/she has proved its gifts as a preacher, has been ordained by its church to the ministry and who, according to Baptist custom, has been called by the church to become its pastor.”<sup>16</sup> The term “call” in the African American tradition is based on a similar situation of God calling Moses. Moses, like some preachers in the African American, tradition heard God calling his name and giving specific direction about what the assignment was. Gayraud S. Wilmore described this call of God as “a relentless spirit that had pursued . . . It is the classic dilemma of the prophets of the Old Testament from Moses to Amos. They could always find an excuse for refusing the mantle of the prophetic calling. But in the end-contrary to their own preferences-they were drawn irresistibly to the awesome responsibility.”<sup>17</sup> In the Living Bible, John 15:16 states, *you didn’t choose me, I chose you. I appointed you.*

“Our English word ‘prophet’ comes to us from the Greek word *prophets*, which literally means one who speaks for another, especially for a deity. The corresponding Hebrew term is *nabi*, which is apparently related to the Akkadian verb *nab*, meaning ‘to call, to announce, to name.’”<sup>18</sup>

The prophets of old were regarded as persons through whom God speaks to the

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<sup>16</sup> J.R. Hobbs, *The Pastor’s Manual* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1962), 184-185.

<sup>17</sup> Wilmore, *Black Religion*, 67.

<sup>18</sup> Bernhard W. Anderson, *Understanding the Old Testament* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1986), 248.

people. These prophets were called to be God's spokesperson; they received the promise that God's word would be put in their mouths. "The purpose of God's speaking through a prophet was not to communicate information about a timetable of events for the distant future. To be sure, the prophets often made predictions, in the conviction that Yahweh was shaping the course of events leading from the present into the future."<sup>19</sup> The main concern of the prophet was the present. The prophet's task was to communicate God's message for now.

"In the time of Saul, devotion to Yahweh, fired by the energy of prophetic enthusiasm, was Israel's bond of unity and strength in the struggle for survival. However, when Israel became a nation . . . The role of prophets in relation to the political establishment proved to be ambivalent. Some prophets, like Elijah, stood outside of the power structure and were viewed as enemies of the king (cf. I Kings 21:20). As radical critics of society, they advocated rapid, revolutionary social change. Other prophets operated within the social structure, advocating more orderly social transition."<sup>20</sup>

In times of political crisis, the prophet was most suited to be the spokesperson for Yahweh. The prophet was able to interpret the meaning of events and proclaim the will of God in concrete terms, speaking under the influence of Yahweh's spirit.

This writer has chosen Exodus 3:7-12 as a biblical foundation. This text provides insight into the very nature of the problem. Moses was a prophet called of God to speak to power and the oppressed.

#### Exodus 3:7-12

7 Then the Lord said, "I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt: I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their suffering, 8 and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. 9 the cry of the Israelites has now come

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 249.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 253.

to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. 10 So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.” 11 But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?” 12 He said, “I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain.”<sup>21</sup>

These passages demonstrate the larger framework of God’s divine call, God’s plan for the oppressed and God’s wrath on the oppressor. “The patriarchs are mentioned to show that it is no new or unknown God who speaks, but One who made a covenant with the fathers of the nation and who still remembers it.”<sup>22</sup>

The narrative describes the nature of the vocation and the power of the “call.” This “call” is met by Moses resistance as he offers alibis, excuses and reasons against the “call.” Because Moses never gives any reasons behind not wanting to take on this role, it could very well be suggested that Moses understood that this call could mean giving up his life as he knew it for the sake of Gods purpose. So it is with the “call” of God that we say; “yet not My will, but Yours be done.”<sup>23</sup>

God calls Moses to speak to power and transform the lives of the oppressed. “Moses response, following convention, is “Here am I,” indicating readiness to submit and obey.”<sup>24</sup>

This exchange established the right relation of sovereign and servant. “This is the first hint we have that the life of Moses has a theological dimension, for the categories of

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<sup>21</sup> Exodus 3:7-12, *NRSV*

<sup>22</sup> *The One Volume Bible Commentary*, (New York, NY: Macmillan Publishing Co. 1936), 51.

<sup>23</sup> Luke 22:42 *NRSV*

<sup>24</sup> John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Four Last Books of Moses Arranged in the Form of a Harmony Volume First* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), 44.



his existence until now have been political.”<sup>25</sup>

“The commanding voice in the bush asserts an awesome limit, caused by the reality of God’s holiness . . . The voice in the fire asserts that God’s own preemptive presence is here. That presence transforms everything at hand, including the place and the conversation.”<sup>26</sup> Because of the presence and speech of God the place has been transformed. At that moment Moses is taken up into the sphere of God. God speaks again but Moses hides his face. God then reveals to Moses all that needs to be known of God.

God says, I have seen, I have heard and I have known. These are actions that God takes toward Israel. Israel is the object of God’s intense attentiveness. “The first verb, “I have seen,” acknowledges affliction, and instead of “sons of Israel” claims the slaves as “my people.” The second verb, “I have heard,” is roughly the same. The third verb, “I have known,” ends cryptically in 2:25, but there has the object, “sufferings.”<sup>27</sup>

God acknowledges the afflictions, cries, and sufferings of Israel. God has ultimate control over everything and every situation. “God now snatches Israel from the destructive power of Egypt.”<sup>28</sup>

“In one brief utterance, the grand intention of God has become a specific human responsibility, human obligation, and human vocation. It is Moses who will do what Yahweh said, and Moses, of heaven and earth, of great power and dangerous strategy is all carried in the statement ‘I will send you.’”<sup>29</sup> It is with this same call and assurance that

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<sup>25</sup> *The New Interpreter’s Bible, Volume I* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 712.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 713.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

God spoke to Moses then as God speaks to the prophet and prophetess today.

“After the massive intrusion of God, the exodus has suddenly become a human enterprise. It is Moses who will meet with Pharaoh. It is Moses who will ‘bring out’ ‘my people.’ It is Moses who acts in the odd joining of God and human history.”<sup>30</sup> Moses is called and summoned by God to challenge the status quo of enormous imperial power. When a mandate is given by God to the prophet, that prophet is given a word and power to accomplish the task.

It is in the New Testament, Luke’s gospel, that we find Jesus’ words concerning the poor as in the case of Luke 6:20-24.

#### Luke 6:20-24

20 Looking at his disciples, he said: “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. 21 Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you laugh. 22 Blessed are you when men hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man.”<sup>23</sup> “Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven. For that is how their fathers treated the prophets. 24 But woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your comfort.”

In the book of Luke, Jesus blesses the poor and the hungry without offering any spiritual interpretation.

“The poor symbolize the pious of Israel who await the coming of the Lord. The vivid character of Luke’s blessings can be seen in the third beatitude: the contrast between weeping now and laughing in the time to come.”<sup>31</sup>

Luke is speaking directly to the disciples. The first beatitude declares that the

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> *The Interpreter’s One-Volume Commentary on the Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971), 682.

kingdom of God belongs to the poor. This is a reference to the Jesus' fulfillment of Isaiah 61 and it echoes Jesus' announcement of good news to the poor in Nazareth (4:18).

"The blessing of the poor neither idealizes nor glorifies poverty. It declares God's prejudicial commitment to the poor. The coming of the kingdom will bring a reversal of fortunes. . . The first two references to the kingdom in Luke (4:43; 6:20) make it clear that one of the principal hallmarks of the kingdom will be the redemption of the poor. They will be released from their degradation. Oppressed now, they will enjoy God's blessings in the kingdom. The hungry will be fed, and those who weep (cf. "mourn" in Isaiah 61:2; Matt 5:4; Luke 6:25) will laugh."<sup>32</sup>

Jesus ministry and teaching went against the norm of every conservative expectation. His ministry was scandalous in that Jesus was an outcast. Howard Thurman states, "The economic predicament with which he was identified in birth placed him initially with the great mass of men on the earth. The masses of the people are poor."<sup>33</sup> This text is a prophetic call for justice for the poor. The liberation theologian, Gustavo Gutierrez, commented that

God has a preferential love for the poor not because they are necessarily better than others, morally or religiously, but simply because they are poor and living in an inhuman situation that is contrary to God's will. The ultimate basis for the privileged position of the poor is not in the poor themselves but in God, in the gratuitousness and universality of God's *agape love*.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 143.

<sup>33</sup> Thurman, *Jesus and the Disinherited*, 17.

<sup>34</sup> Gustavo Gutierrez, *Voices from the Margin: Interpreting the Bible in the Third World*, (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1991), 131.

To have familiarity with the plight of the poor, the beatitude mystifies us and yet leaves us with a feeling of hope. This hope can open our eyes and heart to a new understanding of what it means to walk with Christ.

### Theologically

Racism is a real problem in America. The crisis is brought on by the continued resistance of elements all around us to treat people as equals. Though laws exist concerning the rights of all people, this element yet lingers. “The Civil Rights Acts of 1957, 1960, 1964, and 1968; the Voting Rights Act of 1965, as amended through 1992; the Equal Credit Opportunity Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act; the National Voter Registration Act; the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act; the Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act; and additional civil rights provisions contained in other laws and regulations. These laws prohibit discrimination in education, employment, credit, housing, public accommodations and facilities, voting, and certain federally funded and conducted programs.”<sup>35</sup> The late Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., wrote an article entitled, *The Current Crisis in Race Relations*, in which he discussed the issue of race.

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<sup>35</sup> U. S. Department of Justice, *Civil Rights Division's Activities and Program Brochure* (August 2002), Available <<http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/activity.html>> accessed 21 June 2006.

“The crisis has been precipitated . . . by the radical change in the Negro’s evaluation of himself. There would probably be no crisis in race relations if the Negro continued to think of himself in inferior terms and patiently accepted injustice and exploitation. But it is at this very point that the change has come. For many years the Negro tacitly accepted segregation. He was the victim of stagnant passivity and deadening complacency. The system of slavery and segregation caused many Negroes to feel that perhaps they were inferior. This is the ultimate tragedy of segregation.”<sup>36</sup>

Racism is a form of discrimination and exclusion faced by minority ethnic groups.

People of different skin color, nationality, ethnic or cultural background face this every day in America and around the world. Racism deprives people of their basic human rights, dignity and respect.

“It not only harms one physically, but it injures one spiritually. It scars the soul and distorts the personality. It inflicts the segregator with a false sense of superiority while inflicting the segregated with a false sense of inferiority. But through the forces of history something happened to the Negro. He came to feel that he was somebody. He came to feel that the important thing about a man is not the color of his skin or the texture of his hair, but the texture and quality of his soul. So there has been a revolutionary change in the Negro’s evaluation of his nature and destiny, and a determination to achieve freedom and human dignity.”<sup>37</sup>

This determination and freedom must begin in the consciousness of humankind.

This struggle for justice and equality continues today. One of the ways to confront this social ill in America is the method of nonviolence. “Nonviolent action is a technique by which people who reject passivity and submission, and who see struggle as essential, can wage their conflict without violence. Nonviolent action is not an attempt to avoid or ignore conflict. It is one response to the problem of how to act effectively in politics,

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<sup>36</sup> James M. Washington, *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (San Francisco, CA: Harper Collins Publishers, 1986), 85.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.

especially how to wield power effectively.”<sup>38</sup> This method avoided external physical violence as well as internal violence of spirit. Thurman states that

“In a society in which certain people or groups-by virtue of economic, social, or political power-have dead-weight advantages over others who are essentially without that kind of power, those who are thus disadvantaged know that they cannot fight back effectively . . . Even in such a circumstance it is not the fear of death that is most often at work; it is the deep humiliation arising from dying without benefit of cause or purpose. . . It is merely being killed or being beaten in utter wrath or indifferent sadism, without the dignity of being on the receiving end of a premeditated act hammered out in the white heat of a transcendent moral passion. The whole experience attacks the fundamental sense of self-respect and personal dignity, without which a man is no man.”<sup>39</sup>

This issue of social justice must be confronted if change is to occur. Though race is yet a problem in America, to dialogue about the issue is a key to understanding this moral dilemma.

According to King, if the church is to remain true to the gospel of Jesus Christ, it must take a stand on issues of social justice. “All too many ministers are still silent. It may well be that the greatest tragedy of this period of social transition is not the glaring noisiness of the so-called bad people, but the appalling silence of the so-called good people. It may be that our generation will have to repent not only for the diabolical actions and vitriolic words of the children of darkness, but also for the crippling fears and tragic apathy of the children of light.”<sup>40</sup>

The prophetic voice for social change seems to have been silenced within the African American community. Social positioning, economics and fear could have the

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<sup>38</sup> Thomas Weber and Rober J. Burrowes. *Nonviolence: An Introduction*. Available <<http://www.nonviolenceinternational.net/seasia/whatis/book.php>> accessed 10 May 2006.

<sup>39</sup> Thurman, *Jesus and the Disinherited*, 37-38.

<sup>40</sup> Washington, *A Testament of Hope*, 89.

length which helped this internal oppressive state. It appears that if the voice is not silenced, who then is speaking it or who then is shouting it? This silence is the ultimate betrayal of a prophetic voice.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in his sermon, *Guideline For A Constructive Church*, gives a course of actions in guidelines for the mission of the church. "When the church is true to its guidelines, it sets out to preach deliverance to them that are captive. This is the role of the church to free people. This merely means to free those who are slaves. . . You have another group sitting up there who would really like to do something about racial injustice, but they are afraid of social, political, and economic reprisals, so they end up silent. And the preacher never says anything to lift their souls and free them from that fear. And so they end up captive."<sup>41</sup> This silence has affected many people in the church in time past. This writer believes that within his lifetime if we begin to understand the power in speaking prophetically to the masses we will see a shift in the social order for justice and equality in America. He has hope that the silence of the past will turn into a model for social action in the future.

This silence has become a deadly virus that has affected everyone in America. It is a form of diabetes <sup>42</sup> that affects the whole body and then destroys it. This disease of racism produces subtle symptoms, such as blurred vision, that keep the captive in bondage. It causes increased fatigue that stops the warrior from fighting. Early detection of the symptoms and treatment can decrease the chance of developing the complications

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<sup>41</sup> Clayborne Carson and Peter Holloran, *A Knock At Midnight: Inspiration from the Great Sermons of Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr.* (New York, NY: Time Warner, 1998), 109-110.

<sup>42</sup> American Diabetes Association. *Diabetes Symptoms* (May 10, 2006), available <<http://www.diabetes.org/diabetes-symptoms.jsp>>accessed 5 June 2006.

of injustice. This disease of racial discrimination can even present itself in such a way that people are not aware. If we allow it to go untreated, it will cause excess bigotry to build up in the veins of the world. It gradually clogs blood vessels, damages body tissue, and wrecks the eyes, the kidneys, and the heart. It simple kills.

Paulo Freire describes in *“Pedagogy of the Oppressed”* a situation where those struggling against oppression often end up adapting values and strategies of their oppressor, becoming themselves oppressors or sub-oppressors. Though they may be aware of being dominated, yet “their perception of themselves as opposites of their oppressor does not yet signify engagement in a struggle to overcome the contradiction; the one pole aspires not to liberation, but to identification with its opposite pole.”<sup>43</sup>

In breaking the silence, this preacher will become very much aware that to speak prophetically can cause agony to the vocation. To speak prophetically is dangerous. Speaking prophetically to power can cause a person to be on the run for his very life. Even in the midst of that danger, we must speak. We must speak with all the humility that is appropriate to our limited vision, but we must speak.

In *A Knock At Midnight*, Martin Luther King, Jr., used Luke 11:5-6 as a background for the role of the church in grappling with the social ills of society. “The church must be reminded that it is not the master or the servant of the state, but rather the conscience of the state. It must be the guide and the critic of the state, and never its tool. If the church does not recapture its prophetic zeal, it will become an irrelevant social club without moral or spiritual authority. If the church does not participate actively in the struggle for peace and for economic and racial justice, it will forfeit the loyalty of

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<sup>43</sup> Freire, *Pedagogy*, 45.



millions and cause men everywhere to say that it has atrophied its will.”<sup>44</sup>

African Americans seem disappointed with the church. The reason could be many things, but one that comes to mind is that of selling out to the oppressor. The church must become the voice for the voiceless. It must speak hope to the hopeless and help to the helpless. The church must become the social conscious of America. It must speak prophetically to power without fear.

In the Bible one of the promises of God is land.<sup>45</sup> The children of God are promised a land of their own in which they will live as the proper inhabitants and not as outsiders or strangers. This is a land flowing with milk and honey, justice and equality. It is in America that the African Americans have been made to feel as outsiders dwelling in a foreign land. A serious social debt is owed to African American.

It is evident that in the African American community, the exploited and marginalized have become conscious of living in a foreign land that is hostile to them. This land is a land of death, a land that has no concern for their most legitimate interests. This land is a foreign land that serves only as a tool for their oppressors. This land is a land that has become alien to their hopes and is owned by those who seek to terrorize them.

The African Americans were exiled by unjust social structures from a land that in the final analysis belongs to God alone. It is a struggle for rights and is located within a quest for the kingdom of God and its justice. The struggle is part of the journey to meeting the God of the kingdom. The struggle is also a collective undertaking for liberation in which the spiritual combat is making more searching demands because it has

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<sup>44</sup> Carson & Holloran, *A Knock At Midnight*, 72-73.

<sup>45</sup> Exodus 3:8 *NRSV*

taken on social and historical dimensions. Familiar paths now lead to a street with only one way. Those who, nonetheless, refuse to be discouraged seek more fruitful paths and the high price that is paid is dissatisfaction, fear, and sometimes even frustration. In every case there is a keen sense of insecurity that is perhaps inevitable but that also must pass because it is not possible to build a solid and lasting spirituality on a sense of insecurity.

It does seem as if we are living in a foreign land, passing through the desert with much testing and many hardships. The process of repairing all the wrong done to African Americans has become long and hard. The part of the journey that gives strength is the hope that God is an ever present help in times of need. The seeds of a new spirituality can germinate. This spirituality gives rise to new songs to the Lord. These are songs filled with an authentic joy because it is spirituality that is nourished by the hope of a people familiar with the suffering caused by poverty and contempt. We have learned to trust in the Lord who is a *stronghold for the oppressed*. (Ps.9:9, NRSV).

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **HYPOTHESIS**

The hypothesis for this model is to address the issue of what I believed as Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church not having a voice for social justice within the community of Tunica County, Mississippi. It is my belief that through the preached word and conscious raising activities, Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church can move from a place of complacency to become a socially active congregation. This move of the historical black church has been described in the previous chapter (Chapter Three).

It is my belief that this project will demonstrate and create through the preached word and through conscious raising activities an environment whereby Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church was empowered and became a change agent within the community of Tunica County, Mississippi.

#### **Description of Ministry Project**

The plan of this project is to develop a model for ministry through qualitative insights using data in a grounded theory approach. These insights will be used to develop a social action plan specifically speaking to the ministry of cultural and social change. This model will serve as a blueprint for affecting change in the consciousness of members of Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church and the role of this church in a larger portion of the Tunica County, Mississippi community.

This project is born out of a desire to seek understanding of the prophetic voice and how this awareness through consciousness raising sermons and activities can move a people to become a change agent in society. The challenge is to investigate the role of Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church as an activist.

### Research Design

The objective was to preach a five-part series of prophetic-inspirational sermons during the regular worship hour over a period of five weeks. It will be held during the latter part of January and all of February 2005.

In the beginning of this project the context associates completed a pre-questionnaire. This questionnaire was an introduction to the project. The sermon was to be introduced by first presenting a recorded video series, "Eyes on the Prize: American Civil Right Years." These series focuses the attention of the nation on the oppression of African American. A selected number of members completed a sermon response survey at the completion of each sermon.

Session one started with the showing of the film series "*Eye on the Prize, volume 2: Fighting Back (1957-1962)*." This video set the stage for the sermon which was preached prophetically from Luke 19:1-10. The sermon title was "Don't Keep Quiet." The sermon focused on the power of speaking with clarity. The motive was to speak to the heart and consciousness of the context associates with power and cause them to become change agents in the community.

Session two started with the showing of the film series "*Eye on the Prize, volume*

4: *The Time Has Come (1964-1966)*.” This film set the stage to preach prophetically from Luke 13:10-17. The sermon was titled “Free to be Free.” The sermon focused on finding freedom in Christ and in the world. The motive was to speak to the consciousness of the context associates and show them through the preached word that God has given them freedom.

Session three started with the showing of the film series “*Eye on the Prize, volume 5: Power!*” This film set the stage to preach prophetically from Mark 10:4-52. This sermon was titled “The Power of a Shout.” This sermon was to focus on seeking God in the midst of trials. The motive was to speak to the consciousness of the context associates concerning mobilizing the community in order to create positive change.

Session four started with the showing of the film series “*Eye on the Prize, volume 4: Two Societies (1965-1968)*”. This film set the stage to preach prophetically from John 7:6-7. This sermon was titled “Dealing with the Spirit of Hate.” This sermon was to focus on internal oppression and conflicts. The motive of this sermon was to speak to the consciousness of the context associates concerning hate and internal oppression.

Session five started with the showing of the film series “*Eye on the Prize, volume 5: The Promise Land (1967-1968)*”. This film set the stage to preach prophetically from Luke 23:34. This sermon was titled "Healing through Forgiveness." The sermon was to focus on forgiveness through love. The motive of this sermon was to bring awareness to the consciousness of the context associates that forgiveness is the tool for healing.

## Research Methodology

The research approach presented in this qualitative research is grounded theory research. “Grounded theory begins with a research situation. Within that situation, your task as researcher is to understand what is happening there, and how the players manage their role.”<sup>1</sup> This research was done through observation, interviews, reflective analysis and group discussions. Grounded theory is a research method developed by Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss in 1967. In this research comparative analysis is the basic analysis used. “Incidents are categorized, their properties are identified, and models are constructed.”<sup>2</sup> It is a general methodology for developing theory, which is grounded in data systematically gathered and analyzed.

“What most differentiates grounded theory from much other research is that it is explicitly emergent. It does not test a hypothesis. It sets out to find what theory accounts for the research situation as it is. In this respect it is like action research: the aim is to understand the research situation.”<sup>3</sup>

Grounded theory research will provide a glimpse into the area of racism and how it has had a lasting effect on the social phenomena, the black church. It is hopeful and desirable that a theme will evolve determining the root cause of internal oppression within the congregation of Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church. “Theory develops and

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<sup>1</sup> Bob Dick, *Grounded theory: a thumbnail sketch* (September 2005), available <<http://www.scu.edu.au/schools/gcm/ar/arp/grounded/html>>accessed 10 February 2006.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

evolves during the research process due to the interplay between data collection and analysis phases.”<sup>4</sup>

Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church in Tunica County, Mississippi is a social phenomenon within itself. Any preconceived notion, assumption or question concerning the why, what, and how will come to light as the research moves forward. This is the reason for choosing grounded theory research.

The heart of this process is constant comparison. At first, there is a comparison of questionnaires to interviews. As a theme begins to emerge, there is a comparison of the interviews with surveys. During this process, notes were taken (coding), categories and their properties (sub-categories) were identified. It is at this point the literature to support the research was chosen.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

According to Glaser and Strauss, in grounded theoretical research there is “no one kind of data on a category or technique for data collection is necessarily appropriate. Different kinds of data give the analyst different views or vantage points from which to understand a category and to develop its properties; these different views are called slices of data.”<sup>5</sup>

Grounded theory generates theory from observation or logical assumptions. The aim is to discover the theory implicit in the data. In this process as the researcher, I will employed a variety of sources, including the pre and post questionnaires, sermon response surveys, community leaders interviews, field observation and focus groups as a reflective analysis in gathering and supporting the data.

## PRE-QUESTIONNAIRE AND POST-QUESTIONNAIRES

After understanding the type of questions to ask within the framework of my content it was desire to ask all open ended questions. By using the same questionnaire at the beginning and the end, proper measurements could be used to measure and interpret any changes in (1) attitudes of how Mt. Olive sees its role and responsibilities in Tunica County, (2) beliefs on what principles, doctrine, opinions and ideas Mt. Olive has concerning the mission of the church and the responsibilities of the pastor, (3) values on what moral responsibility Mt. Olive has to the community and (4) plans of action to move Mt. Olive from a place of complacency to a socially active congregation as a result of the sermon series on social change.

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<sup>5</sup> B.G. Glaser & A.L. Strauss, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (Chicago: Aldine, 1967), 65.



This tool will test the relevance of Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church within the community of Tunica County, Mississippi. It will share some insight of a mission statement and goals for the church in becoming socially active.

The development of fifteen open-ended questions that identified four different areas gave the context associates an opportunity to explain their answers based on each single experience.

### SERMON REPOSE SURVEYS

This method and measurement would give the context associates an opportunity to share with the researcher any response that they had concerning the film series and prophetic sermons. The context associates are to respond to five open-ended questions. The response from these surveys would share any insights that were heard from the film series or the prophetic sermon. The plan was to ask at least five people to complete this survey following each sermon.

### COMMUNITY LEADERS INTERVIEWS

The third method and measurement was to conduct personal interviews with five community leaders who have strong ties to the church community. In the community of Tunica County many of the community leaders served as leaders in the church. The purpose of this method was to gather information of how the community leaders viewed the mission of the church in the community of Tunica County, Mississippi.

The questions for these interviews were open-ended and designed to reveal

motivation behind these individuals' perception of the church and social activism. These interviews were conducted one on one with each participant.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **FIELD EXPERIENCE**

#### **The Project**

Preparing for the event was challenging. Foremost was the task of gathering all of the necessary tools, which were needed in order for the plan to be carried out timely and effectively. The project began on November 21, 2004, with the distribution of a questionnaire (See Appendix A) to be completed by each context associate. This was the method used to introduce the project. Additional time was required to gather information for the series of prophetic-inspirational sermons, which were to be preached; therefore it was decided to begin the project after the January intensive which was January 2005.

As part of the worship service at Mt. Olive the context associates often discussed how far God had brought them. After seeing the series *Eyes on the Prize* on PBS television, I decided that it was a great way to call our context to remembrance. It was important to get the attention of the context from the start. After visiting several libraries in Mississippi and Tennessee, I obtained the video series “*Eyes on The Prize: American Civil Rights Years.*” This video series documented events that helped focus the nation’s attention on the oppression of African-Americans during the period of 1965 through 1985. Each individual video set the stage for a particular sermon.

The sessions, all of which were held at Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church during the worship hour, were offered on five consecutive Sunday morning services, which began January 30, 2005, and concluded on February 27, 2005. Each session

generally lasted for two and one half hours beginning at 10:00 A.M. and ending around 12:30 P.M. The motive for preaching these series of prophetic sermons and offering a video series was the call to action for the context associates.

### The Pre-questionnaire

In November 2004, the open-ended pre-questionnaire was distributed to eighteen context associates within our congregation; all eighteen of the pre-questionnaires were completed and returned the same day. The purpose and objective of these pre-questionnaires was to determine the context associates current reality regarding the church's mission, attitudes, beliefs and values as change agents. It was also the desire of this writer to see if there were any impacts on the research design. This questionnaire included fifteen open-ended questions to which the respondents were asked to answer and make a statement. These questions will serve as a pre-test in measurement of the attitudes, beliefs, values and plan of action before the project is implemented. A copy of the pre-questionnaire, pre-questionnaire responses and cover letter is attached in Appendix A. The pre-questionnaire is broken down into four categories. These categories are:

- A. Pre-Attitudes regarding the role and responsibilities of Mt. Olive in Tunica County, Mississippi.
- B. Pre-Beliefs on what principles, doctrines, opinions and ideas Mt Olive has concerning the church mission and responsibilities of the pastor.

C. Pre-Values on what moral responsibility Mt. Olive has to the community of Tunica County, Mississippi.

D. Pre-Plan of Action to move from a place of complacency to a socially active congregation.

The response in this categorizing process is subjective in that some statements could possibly fit into another category. The objective is a) to give voice to respondents, b) to bring awareness to the consciousness of the context associates concerning issues of race and leadership in the church and the community.

Responses were tabulated for each category which included calculation percentages for each statement. The following table is a breakdown of survey questions by category.

Table 1:Pre-Questionnaire

	Category A: Attitudes
1	What should be the goal of the Church?
2	In what way are you affected by Affirmative Action?
3	Do you believe that racism is a problem in America?
4	Does one vote make a difference in the election process?
	Category B: Belief
5	Why are you a member of this congregation?
6	What are the duties of the Pastor?
7	Do you believe that the church of today is relevant in today's society?
8	Do you believe that God has called people to the gospel ministry?
9	What should the Pastor preach and teach?
10	What makes a good leader in the church?
	Category C: Values
11	Should the church get more involved in community affairs/social issues? Why?
12	Is there a difference between the pastor of the church and the politician?
	Category D: Plan of Action
13	Have you ever participated in a protest? Explain.
14	Are you involved with any civil rights organization/group? Explain.
15	If you had the opportunity to speak out on one issue, what would it be and why?

### Category A: Pre-Attitudes: The Role of the Church

It is important to this researcher that proper measurements of the current attitude of the context associates be determined. This researcher is interested in the consciousness of the context and the role of the church in the community. This researcher will seek the personal view of how Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church sees its role in the community of Tunica County, Mississippi.

According to the responses from question #4, fifty percent stated the goal of the church should be to win souls for Christ, while 25% believed the goal of the church is to support the community and that the church should have a voice in concerns of the community. The remaining 25% believed the goal of the church is to provide leadership for the entire community. The church is the guiding force within the community.

More than 80% of the respondents to question #11 felt they are affected by affirmative action; while 10% felt they are not affected in any way. The remaining 10% did not understand affirmative action.

In response to question #12, overwhelmingly 90% of the respondents stated that racism is a problem in America. Some of the respondents stated that they had experience racism in the workplace, hotels and elsewhere. One respondent described racism as a hidden problem in America. Ten percent stated that race is not a problem.

All of the respondents to question #15 affirmed that a single vote could make a difference in an election. Many of the respondents explained voting is a process and one vote could be the deciding factor in any election. It was important to many respondents

that the youth are informed of the African Americans and others who died for the opportunity to vote.

The data suggests that the context associates were very traditional concerning the role of the church in society. The church served as a refuge for the context associates. None of the context associates mentioned the church involvement in social issues. It appeared this traditional thought of the context associates came from the historical plantation church. It was a belief that stated “if it was good enough for my mother, its good enough for me.” This statement was a resistance to change. These types of sermons were preached to the slaves concerning submission to their masters with all fear (see Chapter Three). This teaching was taught from the lips of white plantation owners and black clergy as well, to keep blacks oppressed.

#### Category B: Pre-Beliefs: The Principles, Doctrines of Mt. Olive

In beliefs, this researcher is seeking information on what principles, doctrines, opinions and ideas that Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church has concerning the church mission and the responsibilities of its pastor.

More than half (55%) of the respondents acknowledged they are members of the church because of the preaching (question #1); while 45% stated they are members because it is a family church.

Almost all of the respondents (95%) to question #2 agreed the duties of the pastor included teaching and preaching the word of God. It is also noted by the respondents that



a pastor's duty includes the role of a community activist. The remaining 5% of the respondents agreed that the duties of the pastor also include being a servant leader.

In response to question #5, seventy-five percent of the respondents believed the church is relevant in today's society in contrast to 15% stating the church is not relevant, whereas 10% stated the church should be relevant and more involved in community affairs.

In response to question #6, one hundred percent answered yes concerning God calling people to the gospel ministry. Some even made mention that this calling was a special gift from God. "We are all called by God for something, but those that are special are called to preach the gospel."

More than half of the respondents, seventy five percent, stated in question #7 that the pastor should preach and teach the gospel; therefore 25% believe the pastor should preach whatever the Lord places upon his/her heart.

Question #13 concerns what will make a good leader in the church. Twenty-five percent of the respondents agreed that a good leader is a good teacher. Thirty-five percent stated a good follower is a trait of a good leader. Twenty-five percent noted that a good leader is dedicated to the truth and welfare of the people. Fifteen percent stated a good leader in the church is dedicated to Christ. It is noted that the respondents provided explanation to the qualities a leader should possess.

The data suggests that the context associates placed much value in the work and words of the pastor as the leader called of God. Membership at Mt. Olive was generated by the tradition of the church. It was mostly a family church. There was no outreach

program. The data suggests that the role of a pastor in this church was important. This leadership determined if the church would survive.

### Category C: Pre-Values: Moral responsibility of Mt. Olive

This researcher is seeking information regarding what moral responsibility Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church has for the community of Tunica County, Mississippi.

In response to question #3, "Should the church get more involved in community affair/social issues?" Ninety percent of the respondents answered positively yes and 10% answered no. The response to the question regarding the involvement of the church being active in community affairs/social issues presents a variance in range. "The church should be the voice for counseling and spiritual advice," and "The church is the supportive factor in the community" are a few of the responses.

Eighty percent of the respondents to question #14 believed there is a difference between the pastor of the church and a politician, while only 20% of the respondents believed there should be a difference between the two. One respondent suggested "the pastor answers to God and the politician answers to the people."

Historically, the black church was the basic source of religious and moral values. The data suggests that the church get involved with social issues, although Mt. Olive was not. Traditionally the black church was the institutional center of the African American community.

The data suggests that the context associates had a remarkable amount of respect for the pastoral position. Historically and traditionally, the pastor of the black church was

one of the most educated and well rounded individuals in the community. This person was a mouth-piece for the Holy Spirit and spokesperson for the community. Moreover, many of the decision-making responsibilities in the church were given to the pastor.

#### Category D: Pre-Plan of Action

In this process it is important to determine if Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church has an existing plan of action for social activism. Movement is the issue. After assessing if a plan exists, this researcher could better determine what that plan was and how it could fit with the mission and goal of the church. This researcher's objective is to move Mt. Olive from the place of inactive to active. The data are important in understanding if the church is a change agent in the Tunica County, Mississippi, community.

When asked the question of participating in a protest (#8) eighty percent of the respondents stated they have never participated. The remaining 20% stated they had participated in some form of organized protest.

In question # 9 concerning any involvement in civil rights organization, 90% answered no. Some of the respondents explained the reason for this lack of involvement was due to the lack of trust and belief in the leadership. The remaining 10% stated they could not find a cause for involvement.

In response to question #10 concerning speaking out, more than 70% of the respondents agreed that if given the opportunity of speaking out, the issue would be race. Twenty percent of the respondents stated that the issue would be education. Ten percent stated that the issue would center on God.

The data suggest the context associates did not associate the work of Jesus Christ with being socially active. This was traditionally in the attitudes and beliefs of the early plantation church. As pastor, there was the obligation of leading the context associates into a new way of thinking and a way of self-empowerment. At every opportunity, this researcher spoke of the many social ills in and around the community. This researcher discussed ways in which the church could use its voice as a change agent in the community by sponsoring consciousness raising activities such as a Voters Registration Drive.

The data suggest that Mt. Olive did not have a plan of action.

### Summary of Pre-Questionnaire

The purpose and objective of these pre-questionnaires determines the context associates current reality regarding the church's mission as change agents in Tunica County, Mississippi. The pre-questionnaire gave the contexts associates the opportunity to consciously respond to what they believed as it relates to the church. The results provided the opportunity for this researcher to analyze this information based on an assumption concerning beliefs about the power and authority of the preached word.

The context associates responses from the pre-questionnaires were all traditional. The data suggest that Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church voice was silent in the community of Tunica County, Mississippi. It is a church building, which lacks real substance in the community. It is a place where people would gather on Sunday morning. This church does not take an active role in the community. Results from the

questionnaires imply the context associates relied heavily on the voice of the preacher and were motivated by direction from the preacher.

### Session One

January 30, 2005

The work began on Sunday, January 30, 2005 with showing of the film series; *“Eye on the Prize, volume 2: Fighting Back (1957-1962)”*. The film centered on America’s struggle to desegregate schools in the South. After the tape ended, a discussion was held concerning racism. This film series was very powerful for the elder members of Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church. The reaction of grief, sorrow and pain on their faces which was also evidenced in the context associates discussion period.

Question: What did this film do for you?

Respondent 1: It brought up many memories.

Question: What kind of memories?

Respondent 1: Memories of pain and hard times.

Question: Would you share one of your experiences with us?

Respondent 1: During the 1940s and 1950s black folks just had a hard life.

Working on the farm for Mr. Charlie (plantation owner) all day and almost always never having enough money to survive, but we made it.

Respondent 2: I joined Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church in the 1950s. It was called Little Mt. Olive back then. It was a school during the day, Monday through Friday and on Sunday it was a church. Like every other plantation, we had our own church and school. The school term lasted several months, two months during the summer, then closing for cotton harvest season and resuming after Christmas. To this day, I hate cotton. Working the field was hard work. Cotton was king and racism was always around. White folks treated black people badly. Times were hard for us but our faith in God brought us<sup>1</sup>.

Because of some painful memories emerging from some of the context associates, the session was ended with words of thanks. It was evident to this researcher that the context associates carried so much grief and pain from past scares that even watching the film rekindled memories. This pastor/researcher realized that these senior members had much to say. The session ended because of time restriction, but this same context associate continued discussing how important the church was during that time.

Respondent 1: If it had not been for the Lord on our side, we wouldn't have made it.

Respondent 2: God has been good to us. I am 85 years old and God is real to me<sup>2</sup>.

The sermon title was "Don't Keep Quiet", from the book of Luke 19:1-10 (See Appendix B). The prophetic-inspirational sermon focused on the power of praising God

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<sup>1</sup> The oral history at Mt.Olive M.B. Church

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

in the midst of hardship. The motive of this sermon was to speak to the consciousness of the context associates in such a way that their belief in God grew richer through the Holy Spirit. The purpose of this sermon was to raise the consciousness of members of Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church. It was this pastor's hope that this sermon would provide the context associates methods to consciously change the social, economic and political environment of African Americans in Tunica County. This sermon goes far beyond helping the context associates cope with joblessness, poverty and discrimination.

The desire was to focus on the text but also allow the Holy Spirit to have free reign in the delivery. Reaction from the prophetic-inspirational sermon was strong and powerful. The senior member that responded before commented that "The Lord is in this place today." Even during the sermon, this preacher could hear the cadence of "amen and preach It." which is well known as the call and response in the black church. This preacher had not received this form of outward verbal response in the past but believe that the film series gave credence to the sermon.

### Sermon Response Survey

The purpose of this survey was to gather information on what the context associates heard from the sermon and to measure it with what the sermon attempted to convey.

In this methodology three context associates were chosen randomly to complete the survey after each sermon. Five open-ended questions were presented in this survey. A copy of the survey and cover sheet is attached in Appendix G.

Table 2: Sermon 1 Response Surveys

	Statement	A	B	C
1	What was your reaction to the sermon today?	Not often in a life time one can say they've had an opportunity to hear a sermon that was so "alive." The delivery was so energetic. My reaction was excitement. The sermon made me excited.	Great. I want to help others more and to not expect things in return.	The sermon was great. I believe that the theme was that God will not put any more on you than you can bear.
2	Did you feel inspired? If so, how?	Yes, I was inspired by the story. His bravery and trust pleased his faith in the	Yes, I am inspired enough to better myself so that I can	Yes, I was inspired by the word of God today. I am happy in knowing God



		Lord. This act reminds me to be strong in my own faith.	start being a helping hand instead of being the one with my hand out.	is on my side.
3	Did you feel empowered? If so how?	Yes, I did.  Empowered through my fore-fathers action and David's action that I can overcome obstacles.	Yes, Rev. Hargrow words always empower me. When I leave church I feel like a totally new person. I have tried to get more	Yes, because I know that God will make a way and heal my body.

			people to come to church. I want them to feel like I do.	
4	What actions did the sermon prompt you to want to take?	First, I believe in myself, to be a testimony, not to be scared that I may help others.	I want to start coming to church on time. It also makes me want to give support to others	That if I give up, the devil has won and I will not let him do so. I have God on my side.
5	How can our church, community and you as an individual address these actions?	These issues to be address with the truth. Checking the reality then facing a	To give support to all people	I think just by my being here is a blessing from God.

		problem head on with the help of the Lord.		
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The data suggest that the context associates were very traditional in their thoughts and emotions concerning the sermon. The sermon was “alive” and “energetic.” The data also suggest the context associates felt a sense of “empowerment.” The data did not suggest any consciousness raising among the respondents. At this point, there could be no measurement of any new consciousness decision making actions.

## Session Two

Sunday, February 6, 2005

This session began with “*Eye on the Prize, volume 4: The Time Has Come* (1964-1966)”. This focus of the film concerned the civil rights movement in the south and how it helped transform America to dialogue concerning human rights. The highlight of the film was the voice of Malcolm X. Malcolm X preaching power founded on self-respect, self-reliance, and independent Black institutions. Because of Malcolm’s call, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) responded by launching an independent political party in Alabama.

This film prompts a non-verbal reaction from the context associates. Actually, it was so quiet that there was a strong desire to move into the sermon. The nonverbal reaction seemed to be more powerful than the verbal. This writer noticed a certain look

on the faces of the context associates. There was a sense of pride and affirmation concerning who they were. No questions were asked because of the belief that the Holy Spirit had set the stage for consciousness raising activities, change was happening.

The sermon evolved from the book of Luke 13:10-17. The prophetic-inspirational sermon title was “Free to be Free” (See Appendix C). The sermon focused on finding freedom in Christ and in the world. The motive of the sermon and the video was to restore hope and faith in the consciousness of the context associates whereby they could change the social, economic and political obstacles for African Americans in Tunica County. In this sermon, this preacher wanted to go beyond just helping the content cope with joblessness, poverty and discrimination. He wanted the gospel to break the chains of oppression and show how Jesus spoke to those in power for the cause of justice<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Luke 13:16. NRSV

Table 3: Sermon 2 Response Surveys

	Statement	A	B	C
1	What was your reaction to the sermon today?	That I have to choose the side Jesus is on no matter what I am going through.	It was a great sermon.	I want to learn more about steering closer to God and his word.
2	Did you feel inspired? If so, how?	Yes, I was inspired to always do my best and keep God in all of my goals.	Yes, I felt greatly inspired because I have always believed in family and being a support. I am inspired to do more.	Yes, the sermon inspired me in the way of believing more in what the Bible says. I want to learn more.
3	Did you feel empowered? If so how?	Yes, I feel	Yes, I felt	Yes, it was

		as if I can conquer anything that comes my way.	empowered because Pastor Hargrow's remarks were so encouraging.	empowering because I want to go out and tell others the good news of what God has done for me.
4	What actions did the sermon prompt you to want to take?	To go out in the community and help all who have illness and difficulties and let them know God will make a way.	It made me want to do more. I have gotten comfortable in my own life and sometimes forget how a simple word of hope could impact someone else.	The sermon increased my desire to study more about God.
5	How can our church, community and you as an individual address this	Just keep on encouraging	As an individual, I	Showing the community

	action?	us to be the best we can anyway possible.	can make sure that I give support and love, and just to walk with someone who maybe going through.	Gods love by doing and helping all people.
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Through the comments and observation, one noticed that many of the context associates were moved by the film and the sermon. After the benediction, one of the context associates started a dialogue with another associate concerning their being involved with social justice and self respect. This dialogue had a domino affect. Before this writer knew it, there was an open forum. This dialogue permitted the context associates the opportunity of speaking to matters of the heart. The open forum allowed an opportunity to discuss how the church could become more involved in changing the community. This surveyor observed that the context associates were very open to the idea of change.

### Session Three

Sunday, February 13, 2005

This session began with “*Eye on the Prize, volume 5: Power! (1966-1968)*”. This film focused on a solution to the problem of inequality. Many communities mobilized for change. People like Carl Stokes sought becoming the Mayor of Cleveland, Ohio. Activists formed the Black Panther Party in Oakland, California, to advocate for social justice and fight police brutality. This organization fought for social programs and community empowerment.

After the film ended, this researcher opened the discussion period with two questions?

1. What is the purpose of Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church in Tunica County?

Respondent one: I think that Mt. Olive ought to be a place where we can hear the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Respondent two: I think our church should be a healing place for all that want to hear a word from God.

Respondent three: I think that our church should be a place where we are taught how to live holy in this mean world.

2. What can Mt. Olive do to make our community better?

Respondent one: Become more involved with the community.

Respondent two: I think that we should lead by example.



Respondent three: I think Mt. Olive is doing what the church is supposed to do for the community. The church needs people to do God's work in the community.

This discussion period was then closed due to time restraint.

The sermon was preached prophetically from Mark 10:46-52, and the title was "The Power of a Shout." The motive behind this prophetic-inspirational sermon was to bring awareness to the context that standing up to power was the way for the community to mobilize for change. The goal of this sermon was to speak to the consciousness of the context associates and show that one person could make a difference in the lives of many. (See Appendix D)

It was this preacher's hope that this sermon would provide the context associates methods for changing the social, economic and political obstacles for African Americans in Tunica County. The message was focused on liberation. Again, this sermon strived to go beyond just helping the context associates cope with joblessness, poverty and discrimination.

Table 4: Sermon 3 Response Surveys

	Statement	A	B	C
1	What was your reaction to the sermon today?	I felt empowered.	I had a sense that Jesus was the only certain thing in my life but this sermon reassured it.	I loved the sermon.
2	Did you feel inspired? If so, how?	Yes, I have new tools to keep up my fight to become one with God.	Yes, I felt as if I could almost do anything with Christ.	Yes, I felt inspired to speak out on what I believe in.
3	Did you feel empowered? If so how?	Yes, to know and to hear that if	Yes, I feel empowered to go out	Yes, again I felt empowered

		God is for you then  God is more than the world against you.	and let everyone know that God is the only certain person in your life.	to speak out and not keep quiet concerning my belief.
4	What actions did the sermon prompt you to want to take?	To continue in my fight.	The sermon prompted me to want to go and get a job.	I will become a bold child of God and not be passive and accept anything.
5	How can our church, community and you as an individual address this action?	By coming together, because I feel that our churches must become a	The church can only encourage me and my actions.	The voice of the Church and community can be heard if we all work

		strong and leading presence in our community. The church must become the leader.		together as one. A lot can be heard and done when we all come together.
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The data suggest that the context had traditional views concerning the sermon, for many it was emotional. It is the black tradition that the sermon of the African American preacher encompasses all of life's realities (see Chapter Three, Historical Foundation). It was after this session that one of the senior deacons spoke, "Pastor, you are taking us too fast; we just want to wait on God." This researcher did not respond immediately to the individual. The response from the deacon was understandable, but as the researcher I needed to lead and guide the context without taking the response personal. The response proved that it was not about where this research was but where the consciousness of the context associates. The traditional view of this particular context associate was holding the entire church hostage. This writer felt that if he showed them in sermons that the compassion of Jesus Christ<sup>4</sup> and the faith of an individual, change could happen. Therefore, this writer wanted the context associates to believe that Mt. Olive could be the catalyst for social change in the community of Tunica County.

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<sup>4</sup> Luke 13:12. NRSV

## Session Four

Sunday, February 20, 2005

This session began with “*Eye on the Prize, volume 4: Two Societies* (1965-1968)”.

This film focused on the divisions that existed between African Americans and Whites in America. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) led protest marches through white suburbs. This film focused on cities like Chicago and Detroit, where the pain of racial violence was evident in the action of the people. “Two Societies” was a warning from a presidential commission that America had become two societies, separate and unequal. No discussion period was held.

The sermon was preached prophetically from John 7:6-7, the sermon title was “Dealing with the Spirit of Hate” (See Appendix E). The motive of this prophetic-inspirational sermon was to provide information concerning internal oppression and conflicts surrounding hate. The goal of this sermon was to speak to the consciousness of the context associates by liberating them from the past and allowing healing to take place.

This researcher was hopeful that the sermon would provide the context associates methods for changing the social, economic and political obstacles for African Americans in Tunica County. As with the other sermons, this preacher wanted to go beyond just helping the context associates cope with joblessness, poverty and discrimination.

Table 5: Sermon 4 Response Surveys

	Statement	A	B	C
1	What was your reaction to the sermon today?	I felt that the sermon was a very good topic to bring out mainly because we are full of hate and many times we don't even know it.	The sermon was very good. Hate plays a big role in society today.	I can only get over hating others by Jesus because I know I cannot do anything without Jesus.
2	Did you feel inspired? If so, how?	Yes, I felt inspired to look within myself and ask God to help me with my	Yes, the sermon inspired me to stop hating others and love	Yes, I felt inspired to want to apologize to everyone that I have had anger,

		ways.	everyone.	jealousy, or any type of negative attitude.
3	Did you feel empowered? If so how?	Yes, I felt empowered to go out to help others that have ways of hate.	Yes, the sermon empowered me to want to stop the hatred mentality and go show others how to stop it.	Yes, I felt empowered to try my best to deal with my spirit of hate.
4	What actions did the sermon prompt you to want to take?	The sermon makes me want to show a loving attitude to everyone.	Love people through the hard and bad times even when they have	I need to be honest and show as much love as I possibly can because it is the only

			truly hurt me.	way to stop my hating.
5	How can our church, community and you as an individual address this action?	By showing love and affection to everyone by giving and loving.	By showing love to each other and not hating people for what they have.	We can seek forgiveness from God ask others to forgive us and forgive ourselves.

Traditionally, Mt. Olive did not concern itself with issues of social welfare for people in the community, i.e. health care, housing, education and equal rights. Many comments were made concerning the issue of race but nothing was said concerning how change would occur. Furthermore, the issue of internal oppression was almost foreign.

Though the film focused on living in two societies, the sermon dealt with the issue of self-hatred and internal oppression with the goal of restoring dignity to the demoralized, hope to the despairing and redirection to those bent on harboring attitudes of bitterness and hatred. The phrase that the context associates repeated while exiting the sanctuary was “Stop drinking that Hate-ade”. This researcher saw movement and change but could not determine the direction of the contexts. This researcher needed a clear



definition of leadership. It appears that the contexts proved in their action and silence that no one was leading them.

## Session Five

Sunday, February 27, 2005

This session began with “*Eye on the Prize, volume 5: The Promise Land* (1967-1968)”. This film focused on how the Vietnam War divided America. It was Martin Luther King, Jr., speaking out against the Vietnam War that caused a firestorm of anger from white leaders across the nation. SCLC organized a multiracial Poor People’s March to Washington, D.C. to force government response. The highlight of the film for members of our congregation was to show the peaceful protest in support of Memphis sanitation workers. The message that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., delivered at Mason Temple gave insight to his view of the promise land. It was very moving to see and to feel the quietness of that moment. This film proved that the pain of that era lingers even today in the African American community. This film reminded the context associates of the assassins’ bullet that killed Martin Luther King, Jr., and Robert Kennedy. These murders shook America, and riots exploded in hundred of cities.

As always, the sermon was prophetically preached Luke 23:34 and entitled “*Healing through Forgiveness*” (See Appendix F). The prophetic-inspirational sermon focused on forgiveness through love with motive and goals spoken to the consciousness of the context associates concerning the empowering act of forgiveness.

It was this researcher’s hope that this sermon would provide the context associates

tools for changing the social, economic and political obstacles for African Americans. In this sermon, he wanted to go beyond just helping the content cope with joblessness, poverty and discrimination to creating social change by action. No discussion period was held.

Table 6: Sermon 5 Response Surveys

	Statement	A	B	C
1	What was your reaction to the sermon today?	Encouraged. The enemy is wrong and Jesus is alive and well. I can do all things through Christ Jesus.	People need to ask for forgiveness. We need to believe that Jesus has risen from the grave and now live again.	People can't make one decision or have one belief without doubting. It was unique that Jesus referred to healing a disease as doubt.
2	Did you feel inspired? If so, how?	Yes. I am blessed beyond measure. I can breath on my own. I got	Yes, Jesus said if I have the faith the size of a mustard seed.	Not so much inspired but more like awareness concerning my disease. I can

		dressed by myself and had food to eat. All of that is God's blessing.		overcome it.
3	Did you feel empowered? If so how?	Yes, Jesus is with me today. I can be healed today. Everything can be renewed and restored. I am going to win and so is everyone who knows Jesus.	Yes, I have never seen the nail prints or touched the hem of his garment, but every now and then I can feel a tug.	Yes, I felt empowered to make a change before God take his hands off me.
4	What actions did the sermon prompt you to want to take?	To turn off the world	I believe with all my	I will fight my disease

		and get refreshed in the Bible with devotional music and sermons.	heart. I will live in a manner that consists with the will of God.	and not allow it to defeat me because Jesus will help me as long as I ask Him. I need Him more and more.
5	How can our church, community and you as an individual address this action?	Once I know and experience Jesus in my life then I and the rest of the church can go out and witness God's blessing to the community.	We should go into the community and just preach the word to a dying community. That word should be that "Jesus is alive and well."	Just continue to give me moral support because I got myself in this battle but with God's help I can overcome it.

		I can stand up for what right. It's your choice: Right or status quo.		
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### Summary of Sermon Response Surveys

The data suggest that the participants responded to the sermon positively. During a discussion period after session number two, one of the senior members made the remarks that “We were taught that it did not matter how people treated you, God was going to take care of it all in the by and by. Now I believe different because of what we are being taught by our pastor.”<sup>5</sup> The senior member consciously changed and has become this researcher greatest supporter. In my belief this happened mainly because of the sermons, film series and personality of this writer.

The context associates proved to have been affected by the sermons through its emotions, action and open conversation about social issues within the community of Tunica County, Mississippi. After the series of sermons and the Eye on the Prize video series were completed, one of the context associates made a statement that the church should get involved with a Voter Registration Drive. (See Post: Plan of Action)

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<sup>5</sup> Oral History of member of Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church, February 27, 2005.

## Community Leaders Interviews

The purpose of this process was to determine the views of the community leaders regarding the church. This researcher felt that it was important to know if the community leader believed the church to be relevant. Though this researcher seeks the opinion of how the community leaders saw the church the most important element to this process is how the church sees itself as it relates to social activism.

This was a task that I felt uneasy about in the beginning, but by far it was the most encouraging part of the project. It was difficult arranging the schedules together for the interviews. To make the situation easier, management of time was very important. This researcher had a script written so he would stay on task. These leaders included the County Administrator, an African American male; County Road Assistant, a white female; County Road Secretary, a white female; County Program & Project Coordinator, an African American male and the County Code Enforcer, an African American male. A copy of the interview question is attached in Appendix H.

This researcher will summarize their responses by taking each question in sequence. All quotations are from the written transcripts of the interviews.

### 1. What is the role of a leader in the community?

County Administrator stated, "The role of a leader in the community should be held by persons who possess the urge to better their community, who genuinely care about the welfare and concerns of the citizens. This person does what it takes to ensure the community is desirable and a safe place to live, work, and play."

The County Road Assistant stated, “The role of a leader should be a people person, handle affairs, be fair, make decisions, and protect the people the best way possible.”

The County Road Secretary explained, “The person should provide positive leadership, give wholesome advice to people in need and live as an example for others to follow.”

The County Code Enforcer stated, “A leader is responsible for bringing people together to help improve the quality of life for all citizens. The leader should have a vision of where he/she wants to take the people then garner the support for that vision. This process is done by including the citizens in the process.”

The County Program & Project Coordinator stated, “A leader is not a position but rather a way of life. Leaders possess a set of qualities and characteristics that enable him/her to move people in a certain direction. Thus a leader must have followers. Among the qualities leaders possess, honesty is at the top.”

2. What is the difference between the leader in the church and the leader in the community? Explain.

The County Administrator stated that he did not believe there was much difference between a leader in the church and a leader in the community. “Leaders in the church are usually leaders in the community as well. Both hold the same responsibility of the citizens.”



The County Road Assistant stated that he did not feel that there is much difference between the two. “In the church the leader should be a close follower of the Savior. A devoted servant. The same applies for the community leader; he/she need to be devoted to principles of high standards.”

The County Road Secretary stated that the leader in the community answers to everybody. A leader in the church answers to the congregation. All in all both leaders answer to God, so there shouldn't be any difference.”

The County Code Enforcer stated that the church leader is responsible for the spiritual development of the individuals in the community. Proper spiritual development will help people in the community become better citizens. Community leaders are responsible for getting people involved in making communities better by getting them to participate in different processes like education, government, etc.”

The County Program & Project Coordinator explained that leadership was not positional, but it is situational. In other words the situation dictates the type of leader and leadership style. Where a person is not as important as “what's going on”.”

### 3. What are you doing to affect positive change within this community? Explain.

The County Administrator stated that his is to bring people together to work in different areas to improve the quality of life for all citizens in the community. “We should try to always exemplify a positive, Godly attitude because that pulls people into wanting to be involved in the different activities the government is trying to promote. A couple of specific things that we are working on are creating jobs for citizens in the community and more affordable housing for the people in the community.”

The County Road Assistance stated that she always try to treat every person the same regardless of the issues they have. “The way you treat people will affect so much more in the long run. When we meet people for the first time regardless of the reason we should want that person to remember who we are, not how nasty we were. We should want to be treated nicely therefore we should treat people as nice as they will allow. One can smile at a person who is angry and make a difference. Do unto others as we would have them do unto us.”

The County Road Secretary explained that she can not see where she is working hard on change for the community. “It is my desire to work on myself first and if that work we can do that for everybody. There is no black or white, because God created all of us.”

The County Code Enforcer stated the he regrets to say that he is inactive in community affairs. He states, “If and when the right people come forward who have a desire to lead and wants to lead plus have something positive to offer, and then we will not be hesitant about becoming actively involved.”

The County Program & Project Coordinator stated, “Change is the one thing that is constant. Even if we do nothing, there will be change. Positive change occurs when individuals are united toward a common purpose. If we surround ourselves with people that have a common purpose (e.g. education committee). Also, we should constantly upgrade our personal skills to prepare us for any given situation.”

### Summary of Community Leaders Interviews

The purpose of this interview process was to collect information on how leaders in the community viewed the church. As this researcher stated early this process was utilized as a measurement tool.

On question 1, all of the community leaders agreed that the role of a leader in the community is to improve the lives of individuals within the community by providing positive leadership, handling affairs, making fair decisions and protecting the people.

On question 2, all believed that a leader should possess a set of qualities and characteristics that enables him/her to move people in a certain direction. Some of the qualities that a leader should possess are honesty, positive leadership abilities, counseling skills, and be a good listener.

On question 3, all stated that there was not a difference between the community leader and the church leaders. A number of the leaders commented that the community leader and the church leader ultimately answered to God. According to the interview responses many believed that the goal of a leader is to get people involved in making the community better. Selective coding was continued in this process.

The interview questions focused on the community leaders' perspective of themselves and the church. All but one of the community leaders were involved in the local church. The data suggests that many of the leaders served in leadership positions in the church. Out of those who responded, none felt a separation between church leadership and the community leader.

The data suggest that a number of the community leaders were not involved in any social activism causes but mostly all were involved with the church. This researcher felt that many of these individual were taught the same doctrines as it relate to being involved in social activism and the church. Two community leaders mentioned that leadership was not a job but who they are.

### After the Intervention

#### The Post-Questionnaire

In January, 2006, the open-ended post-questionnaire was distributed to the original eighteen context associates; all eighteen of the post-questionnaires were completed and returned to this writer. This post-questionnaire included the same original fifteen open-ended pre-questionnaires but arranged differently, to which the respondents were asked to answer and make a statement. A copy of the post-questionnaire, post-questionnaire responses and cover letter is attached in Appendix B. The post-questionnaire was broken down into four categories. The categories are:

- A. Post-Attitudes regarding the role and responsibilities of Mt. Olive in Tunica County, Mississippi.
- B. Post-Beliefs on what principles, doctrines, opinions and ideas Mt. Olive has concerning the church mission and responsibilities of the pastor.
- C. Post-Values on what moral responsibility Mt. Olive has to the community of Tunica County, Mississippi.

D. Plan of Action to move from a place of complacency to a socially active congregation.

The objective and purpose were to analyze and to observe if change occurred in the consciousness of the context associates concerning issues of race and leadership in Mt. Olive church and the community.

Responses were tabulated and calculated for each category using percentages for each statement. The following is a breakdown of responses to the survey questions by category.

Category A: Post-Attitudes: The Role of the Church

According to the responses from question 1, one hundred percent of the respondents stated in some way the goal of the church should be to win souls for Christ. This response did not change from the original questionnaire.

More than 90% of the respondents in question 2 felt they have benefited from affirmative action, while 10% did not respond. It is noted this response included women's issues as well as race.

In response to question 3, one hundred percent of the respondents stated racism is a problem in America. One respondent stated that racism will always be a problem in America because of the minds of people.

All respondents to question 4 affirmed that one vote could make a difference in an election process, the same as in the first questionnaire. What was significantly different

comparing the responses from both surveys is that of community. A number of context associates mention community whereas before nothing was mention.

#### Category B: Post-Beliefs: The Principles, Doctrines of Mt. Olive

In response to question #5, one hundred percent of the respondents' comments were the same as in the first questionnaire concerning membership in the church.

One hundred percent of the respondents to question #6 agreed that the duties of the pastor included teaching, preaching the word of God and leading the church in all spiritual aspects of the church, which differs from the first questionnaire of 95%. It is also noted that the respondents believed that being a community activist was part of the role and duties of the pastor.

More than 95% of the respondents to question #7 stated that the pastor should preach and teach what God has laid upon his/her heart in contrast to 75% in the first questionnaire. There was no response from the remaining 5%.

In response to question #8, one hundred percent of the respondents believed that the church is relevant in today's society in contrast to 75% stating that the church is relevant in the first questionnaire.

In response to question #9 all respondents answered yes, concerning God calling people to the gospel ministry. One person commented that some were called but others chose it as a profession.

One hundred percent of the respondents stated in question #10 that a good leader

should be faithful, dedicated and have patience. In comparison to the first questionnaire the response were the same.

In comparison, the surveys had very similar responses. The content associates were more focused and had better clarity on what they wanted to express. Though Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist church was very traditional, it has grown to receive others outside of the norm. The congregation now has members who had no prior affiliation with Mt. Olive or any church at all. From this comes a belief that when the context associates are given the freedom to consciously make decisions about their own welfare, change can and will happen. The data suggest that the role of pastor in the community is just as important in the black church.

#### Category C: Post-Values: Moral responsibility of Mt. Olive

In response to question #11, “Should the church get more involved in community affair/social issues?” One hundred percent of respondents answered yes, in contrast to 90% of the first questionnaire.

One hundred percent of respondents to question #12 believed that there is a difference between the pastor of the church and a politician, in contrast to the first questionnaire 80% of the respondents believed that there should be a difference between the two.

Though the percentages have changed, the data yet imply that the context associates placed a tremendous amount of respect on the values in the church.

Historically, the Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church was never involved directly with

any social change. The current data suggest that the church get involved in social issues. At this point, Mt. Olive has become proactive in the community with its plans for to hold a Voter Registration Drive.

#### Category D: Plan of Action

When asked the question of participating in a protest (#13) 80% of the respondents stated they have never participated. The remaining 20% stated they had participated in some form of organized protest. This data is the same but different. The context proved though its action that they were active in the community.

In question #14 concerning any involvement in an organization that had a voice within the community, 90% answered yes. This response is a change from the initial questionnaire which had a response of 90% no. There was no response from the remaining 10%.

In response to question #15 concerning creating social change more than 90% agreed that being involved with the community is the best avenue. Ten percent felt that they had given up on social change ever happening.

The data suggest that the context associates did associate the work of Jesus Christ with being socially active. It was in the sermons and film series that the context received this word. I believed that it is in the consciousness of humankind that change happens and change is happening in the consciousness of the context associates. Liberation begins in the consciousness.



## Social Action Plan

The issue of a Voter Registration Drive was discussed many times in the sermons, dialogue and during the *Eye on the Prize* film series. It was after the film series *Eye on the Prize volume 4: Two Societies* (1965-1968) that the membership of Mt. Olive decided that the goal of the church is to become active as a change agent within the community of Tunica County, Mississippi, by holding a Voter Registration Drive. This researcher called for a vote to hold a Voter Registration Drive and Demonstration. The entire membership voted unanimously to hold the Voter Registration Drive and Demonstration.

Some of the context associates believed that the political leadership in Tunica County needed to change because of inequality. It was suggested by one of the context associates that a Voter Registration Drive would empower the community to vote on a candidate who will speak the voice of the community. The belief is that by holding political leadership accountable for the social and economic outcome within the community, life in the community will improve for all people.

Politicians listen to people who vote because voters employ the politicians. When having a voice in the local, state and federal government, one vote could change what happens to billion of dollars for the community. Helping people register to vote and reminding others how important it is to vote, gives people a voice and makes the democratic process stronger. The ministry of Jesus focused on the social order of society by His meeting people at the point of their needs. Jesus did this by His presence and His work.

Mt. Olive brought together groups with similar values to form a partnership to plan a Voter Registration Drive. The context formed a partnership with local churches like Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church-Robinsonville, Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church-Dundee, and Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., to help carry out the Voter Registration Drive and voter demonstration. These organizations agreed that the current political leadership needed to change.

It is believed by this researcher that the number of individuals made a difference when it comes to speaking to power i.e. political leaders. Coming together with other organizations would support our goal of community building. With this the context associate and other community activist could collaborate and make demands and get commitments on issues that are important to the entire community.

This writer and the context associate sought the involvement of the Tunica County Circuit Clerk's office. The clerk's office provided the voter registration forms and statistical data that showed us the number of registered voters our area of interest. We then compare that information with the number of residents in the area and set a goal of getting people registered to vote. Throughout this process our specific goal was clear. This goal was to build power in order to achieve justice within the community of Tunica County.

The plan was to hold the Voter Registration Drive in Beat One, which is the area with the highest population of new residents in Tunica County. According to the data from the Circuit Clerk's office this area has the smallest percentage of voters. This area is the area in which Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church resides.

Table 7: Social Action Plan

	Goals	Activities	Person (s)Responsible	Timeline
1	To build power to achieve justice within the community of Tunica County.	Unity Rally	Mt. Olive Church	One month before event.
2	To form a partnership with county government.	Provide training to individuals from participating churches and organizations	Tunica County Circuit Clerk's Office	One month before event.
3	To involve the community with all aspects of the registration drive.	Place voter registration signs in visible areas of each apartment complex (laundry room, management office, mail box	Area Churches and Omega Psi Phi Fraternity.	Two weeks before event.

		area, entrance of complex, dumpster area.		
4	Ensure that the tools necessary are available.	Set up tables with all necessary supplies for the Voter Registration Drive. (Pens, clipboards, forms).	Mt. Olive Church.	Day of event.
5	To abide by local, state and federal laws.	Post Federal Election Commission signs stating that services are available without regard to voters' political preference.	Mt. Olive Church.	One week before event and day of event.
6	To bring awareness to the community with flyers	Canvas neighborhoods	Mt. Olive Church and Omega Psi	Day of event.

	and posting in newspaper.	door to door with flyers.	Phi Fraternity.	
7	To register individuals.	Hold Voter Registration Drive.	Tunica County Circuit Clerk Office, Mt. Olive Church and Omega Psi Phi Fraternity.	Day of event.

#### Analyze of the Voters Registration Drive and Voters Demonstration

The Voters Registration Drive and Voters Demonstration was held April 8, 2006, in the sanctuary of Mt. Olive Missionary. (See Appendix J) The event began at 10:00 A.M. with all parties in place. This included members of Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church, Commerce Christian Church, Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church, Tunica County Democratic Commission and Tunica County Circuit Clerk office personnel.

Our first demonstration began with ten individuals signing in. All ten individuals received instructions on the proper use of the new voting machine. According to the Circuit Court Clerk of Tunica County, this event was momentous; it was the first time in the history of Tunica County, Mississippi, that a church body had taken on the responsibility of leading this community in a Voter Registration and Voter Demonstration Drive.

Over the course of the day thirty-five individuals signed in for the Voter Demonstration. Of the thirty-five individuals who signed in all were registered voters.

The context associates began planning for the next drive before the current drive was over. A dialogue began with suggestions on avenues of approaching the community with a Voter Registration Drive. It was suggested by one of the context associates that the church should consider providing food or other incentives as a method of drawing more people. They also discussed using the post office, newspaper, and church bulletins for disseminating information to the masses.

This Voter Registration Drive and Voter Demonstration led by Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church was a catalyst for other churches in Tunica County, Mississippi, to participate in the process of creating social change throughout the community. Mt. Olive has taken an active role as a change agent in the Tunica County community. This researcher believes that because Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church consciously took the initiative to become that change agent in Tunica County, Mississippi, other churches are now holding Voter Registration and Voters Demonstration Drives. On the following day, a question and answer period concerning the Voter Registration Drive was held before worship service. The purpose was to gather information from the context associates. Listed below are questions and responses.

Question: Do you believe that Mt. Olive made a difference in this community by sponsoring a Voter Registration Drive? Explain.

Respondent One: Yes, definitely! The drive shared information with the community concerning the importance of the church being involved in the community.

Respondent Two: Yes, Mt. Olive made a difference. To understanding we are the first church in this community to hold a Voter Registration Drive.

Respondent Three: Yes, we made a great difference and we became an action church.

Respondent Four: Yes, of course

Question: What new insights have you gained concerning social activism and the church?

Respondent One: If we are to be the church with a voice, we must share with the community how Jesus came to set the captive free.

Respondent Two: Jesus whole life was about changing the social order of people lives. Jesus gave women a position of dignity and purpose.

Respondent Three: Jesus was first a Social Worker. He was not concerned about those of high status but more concerned about those who didn't have anything.

He didn't come to get served but to serve. He was very much concerned about the poor, widows, homeless and down trodden.

Question: What are some of the things that the church could have done to make the drive more successful?

Respondent One: We could have had food. People will come out when you have food.

Respondent Two: We could have had more preparation time. We could have made the community more aware by putting out flyers sooner.

Respondent Three: We could have made transportation available.

Respondent Four: Mt. Olive could have had games or something available for children.

Respondent Five: Bring it to our service on Sunday.

Question: Do you believe the mission of Mt. Olive was accomplished in the Voter Registration Drive? Explain.

Respondent One: Yes, we have to start somewhere.

Respondent Two: Yes, I feel that the mission was accomplished but we can't base it on numbers but on the information disseminated in the community.

Respondent Three: Yes

Question: How do you feel about Mt. Olive's understanding of social activism? Explain.

Respondent One: Mt. Olive has a good understanding of social activism but as members we need to support the cause if no one else does. If we believe in what we are doing maybe the community will believe in it also.

Respondent Two: We all have causes that we are concerned about in our community, but I think that we need to concentrate on one cause at a time. We can do it for three to four months and then move to the next one.

Question: Do you believe that Mt. Olive is a leader in the community of Tunica County? Explain.



Respondent One: Mt. Olive is a leader in this community because this church is actually leading the community. In my opinion this is the first church that has opened its doors to the community for social change.

### Triangulation

Data from the pre-questionnaires, surveys and post-questionnaires suggests that Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church became socially active within the community of Tunica County. The context associates believed that the church should lead the community in social activism.

Data suggest that the response from the community leaders as well as the context associates believed leadership was very important to the Tunica County, Mississippi community.

Both components believed that a leader should possess the following:

1. Be actively involved in community affairs.
2. Have the urge to better the community and genuinely care about the welfare and concerns of the people.
3. Believe that leadership is a calling.
4. Have a set of qualities and characteristics that would enable him/her to move people to action.
5. Have the gift of bringing people together to help improve the quality of life for all citizens.
6. Have a vision.

While the context focused generally on the pastor as the leader, the community leaders focused on leadership in a broader sense. The results were the same when it came to the qualities of a leader.

The data suggest that in the area of community involvement, neither the community leaders nor the context associates felt that they were doing enough to create social change. Only one person out of the five interviewed as community leaders felt that they were doing something to create social change in the community.

After the comparisons of the responses from pre and post questionnaires, the data suggest that the attitudes, belief, values and plan of action changed, thereby affecting change in the consciousness of members of Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church and the role of this church in the Tunica County, Mississippi, community.

This writer demonstrated and created through the preached word and consciousness raising activities an environment, whereby Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church has become a change agent within the community of Tunica County, Mississippi, following the “walk of Jesus.”<sup>6</sup> This process was achieved by Mt. Olive leading the community in sponsoring a Voter Registration Drive.

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<sup>6</sup> Luke 4:18. NRSV

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **Reflection**

From the beginning, Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church opened its doors to change when it accepted this researcher as its Pastor. Even with growing pains this context kept moving forward with this writer. He was seasoned, energetic and motivated by the call of God. Mt. Olive accepted the desire to seek a better understanding of the church and its call to the gospel of Jesus Christ. This researcher did not understand the complexity that this project would bring but with faith and patience all involved accomplish the task at hand.

The problem with change is that it is not always instant. At the beginning, this researcher wondered if change would ever occur in Mt. Olive with all its traditional views and attitudes. The Spirit of God taught him how to lead Mt. Olive rather than force them to change. He took a turtle approach and change began to happen, swiftly. This change in the case of the leader took time and patience. Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist church has a long history of internal and external oppression. Part of this oppressive state is imbedded and woven in the very fabric of the pews of the church. It was also imbedded in this researcher, because I grew up in this same community and this same type of church.

There are a few different approaches I would take given another opportunity to do this project again. I would do more investigative work as it relates to prior leadership of the black church in Tunica County, Mississippi. This investigative work would help me better understand my role as a leader and the leadership of Mt. Olive.

The theoretically comprehensive explanation of the social phenomenon is that, the black church is the focus of the black community. If change is to happen in the black community, the black church must take the position of providing that leadership. In the past, the black church and its leaders were at the core of social change for the entire community. From the beginning of the plantation church the black preacher was the advocate for social change as in the case of people like Nat Turner.

This researcher faith increased as he became more involved with the process rather than in the process. When this researcher's rich ancestral history pressed it way through time and space change happened. He has learned over the years that if any one people could be labeled "Survivor", it would be the African American.

During this initial stage of this project there were times when the context associates appeared to be silence in their action. It seemed as if no one wanted to change and no one understood what change was all about. After researching, listening, and investigating I determined that leadership skill were needed to carry this process out.

The context associates have grown in grace, wisdom and knowledge. We all have grained the valuable method of coming together. As we grew through these experiences Mt. Olive became active citizens with renewed minds.

### **Summary**

It has been proven by this researcher that change can happen in the black church. What seems to have been the powerless has now become the powerful. This researcher had the task of interpreting an assumption of silence on the behalf of Mt. Olive. Mt.

Olive's voice was not silence but nonactive and quiet. Quietly the voice was waiting for someone to lead it out in path of justice and equality. This gave me, the researcher a new definition for quiet. It could be a place of reflection or wandering. It could be a place of waiting.

This researcher would described Mt. Olive as a congregation that was waiting on leadership to guide them into social activism. Mt. Olive had the faith and trust but no one to lead them.

The sermons, dialogue and film series brought awareness of the culture to the congregation. The sermons proved to have affected the consciousness of members of Mt. Olive in their community involvement.

During the time of leadership as pastor of Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church, this pastor and researcher discussed many issues concerning social justice in Tunica County, Mississippi and America. It was not a surprise that the context associates would agree to the idea of sponsoring a Voter Registration Drive and Demonstration.

The goal of the researcher was to bring the social gospel to the contexts, while continuing a discussion on the idea of how Mt. Olive could become a change agent in Tunica County.

As the researcher, I decided that the Voters Registration Drive and Demonstration be held in the sanctuary of Mt. Olive because this issue was important to the membership and the community. The sanctuary and the pulpit at Mt. Olive is a place of respect and honor, it is sacred. Mt. Olive comes from a tradition that believes the sanctuary is the place where the spirit of God rests upon the people of God<sup>1</sup>.

As this project moved forward I saw individual members becoming actively

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<sup>1</sup> Exodus 25:8. NRSV

involved with the American Diabetes Society, Tunica County Democratic Committee, and the American Heart Association. One of the context associates, who is a cancer survivor, became actively involved with the American Cancer Society. In the midst of this, Mt. Olive held its first “Hat and Scarf Party” for women in the community going through chemotherapy and radiation treatment.

From its inception the purpose of Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church was to serve the community as a school and worship center. It was not the mission of the leadership of the church to organize a socially active church. As a result of the sermons, film series and reflective focus groups the context associates of Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church made a conscious decision to organize and create a social action plan for the purpose of making Tunica County, Mississippi, a better county, serving the common good for all people. With the guidance of this researcher, the leadership of Mt. Olive decided to use its voice to empower members to seek justice, peace and equality in Tunica County. Mt. Olive believes that the church should be the moral compass for the community in which it resides.

The context associates continued to discuss issues concerning housing, elderly healthcare, safe schools for the youth and economic stability in the community. The main priority was the ability to galvanize the community in addressing issues of economic disparity, to improve the quality of life and resources for all in the community. The membership desires a voice at the table of justice.

Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church used a Voter Registration Drive and Demonstration as an activity to encourage change in the community of Tunica County,

Mississippi. The process of demonstrating the proper use of a voting machine and enrolling citizens to vote in elections gave each citizen a voice at the table of justice.

Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church had a very traditional view of the church and its involvement within the community. It was because of this research Mt. Olive was awakened and mobilized to become a change agent in Tunica County, Mississippi.

Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church is a voice in Tunica County, Mississippi, that has affected social change by responding to the cry of the people while actively leading the community to social activism.

### **Conclusion**

The evil of racism happens in America daily. Based on this researcher finding the process of recovery from this trauma is a never ending process. As African American clergy our purpose should be to build people rather than just buildings. Every person should be given the opportunity to seek peace and joy in his/her own life.

Any problem in the African American community is a problem in the black church. They are one and the same. The black church is the heart beat and pulse of the African American community. The preacher, regardless of race, has a responsibility to speak a prophetic word from God to the church.

The main objective of this project was to determine if the prophetic voice prompted the consciousness of the members of Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church to become change agents within their community. This objective was met by guiding the context associates into the process.

In this project, I accomplished the task of developing a model for ministry through qualitative insights using data in a grounded theory approach. These insights were used in the development of a social action plan specifically speaking to the ministry of cultural and social change. This model served as a blueprint and affected change in the consciousness of members of Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church and the role of this church in the larger portion of the Tunica County, Mississippi, community. Through this model the prophetic voice of the preacher through consciousness raising sermons and activities moved the membership of Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church from complacency to become activists within the community.

During the fifties and sixties the black preacher helped mobilize the community for Voter Registration Drives and boycotts to change laws and leadership. As the pastor of Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church, the call is clear to give a word from the Lord. This researcher has found peace in his call to preach a gospel of salvation, deliverance, justice and freedom from the oppressor. In addition to fighting a good fight of faith this researcher has found the strength to share with others insights concerning the history of African Americans in Tunica County, Mississippi.

When the research was a young child, he played a game called, “follow the leader.” In this game whatever the leader did, the participant had to do. The objective of the game was to follow the leader and do what the leader said. In other words, conform. If one did not conform that person was out of the game. That is what was taught in Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church.

This project was transformational for the context associates as well as for this researcher. It all started with the faith walk of entering this program and seeing it to



completion. In this quest of trying to understand the demons of racism in America, this researcher had the experience of identifying his own internal oppression.

This project is ongoing and proved to be life changing for the context. To put a time frame on change would be in vain as it may take days, weeks, months or even years but as a church we must speak to empower the poor, downtrodden and helpless.<sup>2</sup> All must articulate with clarity and boldness concerning the mission of Jesus Christ and His effect on social change.

Additional work is desperately needed in the area of internal oppression within the black church such as a study on the health care crisis and mega ministries, etc.

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<sup>2</sup> Psalms 12:5.

**APPENDIX A**

**PRE QUESTIONNAIRE**

The following questionnaire is part of a research program to measure the attitudes, beliefs and values on social change, and their relevance to the mission of the church.

Rev. Henry I. Hargrow, Jr.

Please complete the following questionnaire by answering the question with a complete sentence.

1. Why are you a member of this congregation?

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2. What are the duties of the Pastor?

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3. Should the church get more involved in community affairs/social issues? Why?

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4. What should be the goal of the Church?

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5. Do you believe that the church of today is relevant in today's society?

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6. Do you believe that God has called people to the gospel ministry?

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7. What should the Pastor preach and teach?

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8. Have you ever participated in a protest? Explain.

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9. Are you involved with any civil rights organization/groups? Explain.

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10. If you had the opportunity to speak out on one issue, what would it be? Why?

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11. In what way are you affected by Affirmative Action?

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12. Do you believe that racism is a problem in America?

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13. What makes a good leader in the church?

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14. Is there a difference between the pastor of the church and the politician?

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15. Does one vote make a difference in the election process? How?

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## **The Questionnaire Response**

The response from the questionnaire was broken down into four parts: (1) attitudes, (2) belief, (3) values, and (4) plan of action. Fifteen questionnaires were completed by the context associates.

### **Attitudes**

What should be the goal of the Church?

#### **Answers**

To be a supporting factor in the community.

To get the message of the Lord across to all, not just the ones who are inside the church.

To help the sinners see God.

The goal of the church should be for individuals to grow physically, mentally and financially.

Reach someone's heart to live in the name of the Lord. Teach people the right way of the Lord.

The goal of the Church is to win souls.

To reach out to strangers that don't know God, show love towards one another.

The goal of the church should be to become more and fully into Christ.

The goal is to share the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and show the love of God.

Our goal is to make a change, to become one big family, because when one person hurt we all hurt.

Our goal is to spread the gospel all over the county, showing the community Jesus' love and forgiveness. Win souls for Jesus.

Our goal is to pray and worship God.

Our goal is to come and listen to the word, for the preacher to preach the word and tell like the Bible say. Don't take nothing away or add anything to it.

Our goal is to tell the church the truth about the gospel.

The goal of the church is to teach us about the word of God, then show these teachings by example.

The goal and main goal of the church is to lead as well as show people the way to our Savior Jesus Christ.

In what way are you affected by Affirmative Action?

Answers

I'm affected in the sense that I know that we'll have our young blacks leave and be able to have opportunities to make a difference, but affirmative action does not exist in Tunica.

I'm sure that I am affected or at one time I have been affected. My mind has failed me at this point and I can't think of anything.

I don't have to work on the field or farm anymore.

I'm not that knowledgeable on Affirmative Action. I think it should be taught so we will know how we are affected by it.

I'm affected because I am a black female and over 40. Affirmative Action is supposed to protect against prejudices and injustice.

It's very disturbing that the people have been bought out. No voice!

I have been affected by Affirmative Action because I have the will and ability to be able to work just like the next average man.

Affirmative Action open doors that have helped some to realize their work value.

No, never felt as if I was.

I have gone to places where the signs read colors or whites only. I couldn't eat in certain restaurants; we had to go out back.

I am affected in so many ways that I couldn't begin to tell.

I can't say definitely at this time if I have been affected.

Do you believe that racism is a problem in America?

Answers

Oh, yes!

Racism is a hidden problem in America. Some places it is revealed more.

Yes, racism is still a problem because we don't stand against it.

Yes – very much a problem.

Yes, I do believe that racism is a problem in America.

No, because I can go and do anything I wish because of the Lord.

Yes, people are being judge unfairly because of racism.

Absolutely! Racism has been and always will be a problem in America.

Not only in America-The world. There are so many forms of racism.

Yes, racism is a problem and it's getting worse. It has gotten more hidden, less visual but much harder to counteract.

Oh yeah, racism will always be.

Yes, racism exists throughout the world.

Yes, racism is a real problem.

Does one vote make a difference in the elections process? How?

Answers

Yes, because it is like my mother said, "If your vote does not make a change now, if you keep voting it will one day."

Of course! An election could be tied; one vote could make the final decision.

One vote can make a difference.

Yes, that one vote could be the one that makes a difference.

Yes, there is a difference.

Yes, the election process is represented by the number of votes.

Yes, in any election one vote can make a tremendous difference. One vote could be the deciding vote for President, Mayor, etc.



Yes! The election of the Mayor of Memphis was won by a small majority, approximately 125 votes.

Yes, everyone should make a choice of who they want to be their voice/leader

Yes, by voting my conscience and I become a voice God can multiply and use in our country

Yeah, that one vote could tell if you win or lose.

Yes, one vote could be the one that makes or breaks the election.

Yes, because it's your chance to voice your opinion through vote!

Yes, that one person can make a difference because he can make the right choice.

Yes, that one vote can easily determine which direction an election can go.

### Belief

Why are you a member of this congregation?

Answers

At first, I was looking for a Church home now I belong. Now I have my second home, family and my rock.

I wanted to be a part of this congregation that believed in God because of my love for him.

I am a member because I chose to be a member.

It's the family church; I've been a member since I was about five years old or younger. It's the only church I have been a member of.

I believe in the Lord and I wanted to learn more about the Lord and his word.

I am a member because the Pastor teaches the word of God, which is the word of truth.

I am seeking my soul salvation, following and trusting in Jesus' name.

I am a member of the Mt. Olive Baptist Church congregation because in this church family is important. We have the potential to be fed and receive the word of God.

I am a member because it is a place where I can worship God without all the conflict.

We all serve the same God.

The people here are like family and the preacher teaches the word that everyone can understand.

I joined this fellowship because my soul felt at home and at peace with my being here.

I am a member because I want to be.

I am a member because I love to be a member of this congregation. I love the Lord and want to hear his word.

I am a member because I am tired of playing church. I want to be really in Christ.

First, I felt welcomed. Secondly, I felt happy in my heart, no sadness but most of all being a part of this congregation helped me to want to know more about God and I am learning to pray.

I am a member because of my interest and commitment to religious work. In addition the friendship of the members of the congregation displayed.

What are the duties of the Pastor?

Answers

The duty of the pastor is to teach.

The Pastor main duty is to lead and teach people into righteousness. Help non-believers to become believers, help the lost.

The duty of the pastor is to preach the word of God to the church.

To insure all operation of the church is run properly and to teach and speak the gospel of the church.

The duty of the pastor is to teach the word of God.

The Pastor duties are to teach and preach. To encourage and guide us, so we can go out and tell the world about Jesus.

The duty of the pastor is to teach the members what thus said the Lord.

The duties of the Pastor are to provide for the congregation. By provide, I mean bring the word of God to all.

The duties of a Pastor are to preach and teach the word of Christ and lead the congregation as Jesus did his disciples.

The duty of the pastor is to lead and be a servant.

The duty of the pastor is to make sure the members of his church gets the word.

The duty of the pastor is to study the word of God, to prepare messages for his flock and deliver them. He is also to make accountable for actions that could cost us our salvation.

The duty of the pastor is to help the congregation to have a better understanding of the Bible.

The duties of the Pastor are many: (1) to perform weddings (2) to funeralize the deceased, (3) to pray for the sick (4) to render community service.  
To preach and teach what the Lord has revealed to him.

The duty of the pastor is to preach to the people and teach the word.

Do you believe that the church of today is relevant in today's society?

Answers

Yes, because this is where a person can learn. You are renewed for the world.

Yes, the church has to be or society would be lost. The ways of the world are not the ways of the Lord. We need our churches.

Yes, the church is always there no matter what.

Yes, a little bit.

Yes, I do believe that the church of today is relevant in today's society.

Somewhat, the church could be more involved.

It is growing more and more in society not as fast as it should which is sad.

Yes, we (children) are the church and we are the product of our environment.

Needed, necessary yes/relevant only if we make such by reestablishing first century love and care for others.

I believe that churches are relevant, but today society is putting the church on the back burner by taking anything pertaining to God out of schools, courthouses, out of society.

I do, but not as assertive as it should be. I feel that the church should let its presence be known to society and the conditions on which it stand.

It should be.

No, because the church today has improved. The pastors today are mostly preaching what the Bible says.

No!

Do you believe that God has called people to the gospel ministry?

Answers

Yes, special people. We all are called for something, but those that are special are called for the gospel and it's a blessing.

Yes, some people. You are able to feel their true spirit that they are really of the Lord.

Yeah, it has to or we would all be lost.

Yes, I believe that God has called people to the gospel of ministry.

Yes, to learn and obey his will and willing to follow his commandments and do his will.

Yes, because if it were not meant or in God's will then they would not be doing the things that they are doing.

Yes, because everyone needs a little help defining things.

I believe that God has blessed all of his children with gifts.

Yes, everyone is called to minister to his/her own corner of the world.

Yes, I do. God has specific tasks for specific people, to preach, to sing or just sit and listen.

Yes, the people called can be easily identified by the life they live and the way they conduct themselves in their respective communities.

What should the Pastor preach and teach?

Answers

The pastor should preach the bible, community affairs, and social and health issues.

A pastor should preach things that are felt from within which are given to him from the spirit of the Lord. The Lord is about love and peace. These should be the foundation or topics.

The pastor should preach and teach the gospel of Christ (Bible).

The pastor should preach what he feels need to be brought to attention.

The pastor should preach what is in the Holy Bible and day to day happenings?

The pastor should preach and teach by the way God is leading him/her.

The pastor should preach the gospel of the Holy Bible.

The pastor should preach only what the Lord sets upon his heart to reveal unto the people.

The pastor should preach whatever God delivers to him for the congregation.

The pastor should preach God's word.

The pastor should preach to teach the word of the Lord.

The pastor should preach only what can be backed by the Bible. He can study commentaries and other translations but only the Bible can interpret the Bible.

The pastor should preach and teach the gospel. Even through the Bible or personal experiences.

The pastor by his calling should preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and teach the word of God which is the Holy Bible.

The pastor should preach the word of God.

He should teach about the word of Jesus Christ that he came and died for us to save the world and not to destroy it because he loves us.

The pastor should preach the truth and gospel.

What makes a good leader in the church?

Answers

I'll take my Pastor as an example. A good leader is one that teaches not preach, one that listens and advises and makes sure you get something from his lessons and life experiences.

A good leader in the church is a person with strong faith and knowledge of the word (Bible).

A good leader in the church is a man or woman who lets God lead his or her life.

A good leader is a good follower.

A good leader is an earnest person

A good leader is a person that can handle diversity in the church. Being able to deal and love everyone.

A good leader is a God fearing person, unwavering love and doing God's will.

To be a good leader in the church one must first show they humble and willing to lead. To be a good leader you first must have been a good follower, but not always.

A good leader is a person that stands on the word of God.

A good leader is one that serves another.

A good leader is a strong person, a person that does not mind helping someone and a person that will treat everyone equal.

A good leader is someone who is spirit filled, living their faith and willing to work in the church doing whatever needs doing.

To be a good leader you must first learn how to be a good follower.

A good leader is one that is committed and dedicated to Christ and his work.

A good leader is a woman or man who speaks the truth and stands on his/her word.

A good preacher, a God sent preacher. If he was sent by God he will be a good leader. You also must be a good follower to be a good leader. Members should love their pastor.

A good leader is a person that stands and share truth.

### Values

Should the church get more involved in community affairs/social issues? Why?

#### Answers

Yes, because the church should be a supporting factor in the community.

Yes, if it has an impact on the members of the church.

No, because back in the day this pastor had to preach what they wanted to be preached.

Yeah, because we need to bring everyone to God.

Yes, because there is always a need for religious counseling and advice. This to me is one of the reasons the church should be involved.

Yes, because through the word we are taught to love one another and through that love we should be willing to help others in anyway we can.

Yes, it is our duty to take a stand for the rights of our fellow human beings. To do nothing is to condone what is going on—you are as guilty.

I think if we get more involved, we will show the community that we are one big family and we can't be broken. Or doors are always open.

People make up communities; the church can't do anything but be involved in the community.

Yes, because in order for us to be more Christ-like we have to help those less fortunate than others.

Yes, because it would be very Christian for the church to go out in the community and help with different situations.

Yes, the church has a powerful voice in community affairs; if they just would come together in unity.

Yes, because people in the church are not the only people who need help.

I don't know, but we should help out.

Yes, there is a need for spiritual involvement.

Is there a difference between the pastor of the church and the politician?

Answers

Don't really know.

Oh yes!!! Politicians will say anything to obtain a vote or should I say most politicians. Pastor speaks from his spirit.

Yes, the Pastor has been called to leadership of God's people; the Politician has been elected by the people.

Yes, a Pastor goes out into the community in his/her church and speak the good news about God. Politicians will talk about God as well but they will put their other business before it.

There should be.

No, they are children of God! It is not necessary for the pastor to mislead the people that make up the church.

Yes, the pastor can inform but not tell others who to vote for. Politicians work with/for the government, the pastor work for God and his church.

Yes, the pastor will try to keep promises made to his congregation while a politician knowingly makes false promises.

Yes, even though there are politicians in the church.

Yeah, major difference politicians lead people according to people.

It should be politicians get to lie but the words say that man shall not lay.

Yes, some pastors are in just for the money, some tell the truth and politicians are in for the money.

Yes, there is a difference.

Yes, pastor is one that teaches or preaches the word. Most politicians use the word for their own personal use.

#### Plan of Action

Have you ever participated in a protest? Explain

Answers

No, but my mother has and I've asked her why and she explain that she had to, to make sure her children have a chance.

Nothing dramatic but I did side against the Catholic Church when parents were trying to reorganize the high school. My protest cost me my job, but did save the school by consolidation.

Yes in high school, I was young and the opinion was not mine. I don't remember why I was protesting.

No, I have not.

No, I have never participated in a protest.

Yes, 1968 in Memphis.

No, never been in this situation.

No, I never had the liberty to protest.



No, never had the opportunity.

Never

No, I have not.

Are you involved with any civil rights organization/group? Explain.

Answers

No, because I think most leaders here in Tunica are easily bought out.

No, because on a local level the organization isn't strong.

No, I am not.

No, I am not involved in any civil rights organizations.

No, never been.

Not exactly, but Bridge Builders is in a sense, because our goal is to erase the color lines.

I am a member of the Masonic Lodge #72.

No, never had motive or drive. I know it's important, just never did.

If you had the opportunity to speak out on one issue, what would it be and why?

Answers

Spirit driven issues are one that will never die, because it is from within.

Prejudice – Every one of God's people deserve equality.

Hidden racism in Mississippi and how it has not changed that much; even in the year 2005.

Racism - reality it exists and it is being covered up.

Racism – this topic is very popular and well known by the majority of everyone but if there is not unification in world then how can we keep it from falling.

Equality

Love

How important school in today's life, it is important to get enough education as possible because you will always be faced with a lot of ups and downs, but a person can never take away what you have learned and believed in.

It is sincerity and honesty in speaking out on issues concerning God.

Racism exist the same it did more 30 years ago.

God, because I am not afraid to tell the people about the goodness of God and if a live for nothing, I will die for nothing, because the truth is the only thing that lasts.

Education is an important issue today.

Racism because it stills exists.

Marriage is sacred and needs to be between one man and one woman.

The help needed for our young blacks that are let out of jail without any support and are back in the system because lack of jobs and community support.

**APPENDIX B**

**POST QUESTIONNAIRE**

The following questionnaire is part of a research program to measure the attitudes, beliefs and values on social change, and its relevance to the mission of the church.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

Rev. Henry I. Hargrow, Jr.

Please complete the following questionnaire by answering the question with a complete sentence.

**Questionnaire (Post)**

1. What are the goals of Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church?
2. In what ways have you been affected by Affirmative Action?
3. Do you believe that racism is a problem in America?
4. Does one vote make a difference in the elections process?
5. How did you become a member of Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church?
6. What are the duties of your Pastor?
7. What should the Pastor preach?

8. Is the church relevant to today's society? Explain
9. Do you believe that God has called people into the gospel ministry? Explain
10. What makes a good leader at Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist church?
11. Should the church become involved in community affairs/social issues? Explain.
12. Is there a difference between the pastor of Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist and the local politician?
13. Have you ever participated in a protest? Explain.
14. Do you have any involvement with organization that has a voice within the community?
15. As a member of Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist church, what can you do to create social change within the Tunica County community? Explain

## Responses to Questionnaire (Post)

### 1. What are the goals of Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church?

To provide leadership to the community

To save souls, to assemble and bring people to fellowship

To save souls, to live in Heaven on earth, to live in freedom, free from bondage

To focus and promote community, salvation of souls, feeding the hungry

Education, enlightening people that Christ is all we need

To bring people into the fold of God

To grow and prosper

To help us learn truth and love one another

To change lives

Food for souls, unity among ourselves and the community, learning and motivation in keeping our bodies fit.

### 2. In what ways have you been affected by Affirmative Action?

I've been blessed by the work of many people before me.

It is what got me my job. It was like a quota. It works in my opinion

I'm truly affected because there are just as many opportunities for women today as it is for men. It is also because of Affirmative Action that you can't be discriminated against because of gender.

It gives me new hope through community

I haven't been

I have been affected through the school in which I attend

To tell the truth I really don't know, these days you can't tell whose on your side, there are always motives

By seeing things the way they are and change is good

The way I have been affected is that Mt. Olive isn't like any other church. It has its own feel, its own type of independence.

I don't see a lot of changes, so I'm only affected about 45%

3. Do you believe that racism is a problem in America?

Racism is a big problem

Yes, it is and will always be. That is why we need Affirmative Action, we get alone but the problem is yet around.

I believe racism is a problem in America. But as an individual, I will continue to work on myself, because I can change the way I treat a person.

Yes, overtly

Yes, overtly

I believe there is racism in some places but not all

Yes

Yes, especially since I've been away from home

I don't like to think that way but sometimes that is an issue

Yes, it does. It's only done in different methods compared to the past

4. Does one vote make a difference in the elections process?

One vote can make a difference

Yes, it makes a difference. Sometimes you wonder but it does. The mindset that it doesn't matter is wrong.

Yes, one vote can make a difference and your opinions and views are important.

Yes, according to the process

Yes, one vote can make the difference

Yes, because if people don't vote, they don't have a voice.

Yes, one vote makes a difference



I think so; it does in school

It can, one voice, one opinion can change the course of the future

Yes, but it's really not the vote, its who the person you're voting for

5. How did you become a member of Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church?

Family church

I was my family's church

I became a member when I moved to Robinsonville, MS, to be with my family

I was invited to play and became a member

I became a member through association from a friend

I became a member because of my family

I didn't have a church home and was passing through and the spirit held my heart

I became a member by coming to church with my mom and enjoying hearing what the pastor has to say

I became a member through my mother

I came to listen to the pastor and the warmth of the temple and the love of the members moved my heart and my spirit

6. What are the duties of your Pastor?

To share the gospel according to the Bible concerning justice and freedom

The duties of the pastor is to be a leader, to shepherd the flock, to lead in the belief of the church, to lead people to God, to take care of individual flock, to watch over the sick.

The pastor's role is to lead us to Christ, to give us guidance and knowledge through the word of God.

The duties of the pastor are to take care of the spiritual aspect of the church, to be a facilitator, outreach.

The pastor should be a spiritual leader

The pastor should teach the word and explain with clarity

The pastor should minister to his people, to bring them closer to God and to save as many people as he can

The pastor is to teach the bible and be honest with the members and community

The pastor is to teach and also learn with the people of the church and not to get side tracked of who God really is

The pastor's duties should be first a teacher, a motivator, a listener

7. What should the Pastor preach?

He/she should be led by the Holy Spirit

The pastor should preach from the Bible, current issues, and real things

The pastor should preach by the guidance of the Holy Spirit

The pastor should be anointed, follow the guidelines and apply to today's life

The pastor should be lead by God

The pastor should preach the truth, meaning what God puts on his/her heart to preach

The pastor should preach the truth, what thus said the Lord

The pastor should preach truth

The pastor should preach what's in the Bible, but not over exaggerating what you read but be simple and to the point

The pastor should simply preach the truth. The truth will cover a multitude of things.

8. Is the church relevant to today's society? Explain.

Yes, the church is relevant

I believe the church is relevant

Yes, it is

I believe the church is; if not the doors should be closed

The church is relevant in today's society

This church is relevant because we take care of the Lord's people

I believe it is

Yes, it is and should always be

Yes, yes, yes

The church is very important and relevant today

9. Do you believe that God has called people into the gospel ministry? Explain

Yes I do. We all have special purposes, some called to preach, some called to listen and some called to do other things.

Yes, some are called to be preachers or deacons. God has a plan for everyone.

Yes, everyone has something special to do in life.

Yes, everyone has a ministry, a duty to perform before time is up

Yes, if God didn't there wouldn't be evangelism, preaching and teaching

Yes, I believe God has called people into ministry

Yes, he has

Yes, God has called all of his children into some type of ministry

Sometimes "yes" and sometimes "no". No, because some chose it as a career. Some are called and some went on their own.

Yes, God cares about all people, so he uses people to speak for him

10. What makes a good leader at Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church?

Honesty and the willingness to change and become open-minded

Someone that knows their fruits and can learn from it

A leader who's willing to listen. A leader who can lead but try to understand his followers

One who leads by example

A good leader is being bold, not boastful

A good leader is one that is anointed, compassion and Christ-like

A good leader is one the studies the word and lives by example. One that listens to his congregants, encourages and guides

Some are born to lead. The heart must lead; it is a gift from God

Faithfulness, dedication to a call, patience

11. Should the church become involved in community affairs/social issues? Explain.

Yes, it should because it was and is the leader of the community. It's usually the main gathering place in any town.

Yes, that is what makes a good church

Yes, because it's the leader of any community

Yes, depending on the issue you can't help everybody or solve every problem. Help with the homeless, Toys for Tots, Coats for Kids, food baskets, and love offerings.

Yes, because the church can help the community by leading it in justice. Showing the community what God says about equality

Yes, the church enhance the community

Yes, no separation from church and state

Yes, if it will build and strengthen the community in a positive way

Yes, the church has a lot to offer regarding political issues

The church should lead the community

12. Is there a difference between the pastor of Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist and the local politician?

Yes, there is a difference. Mt. Olive's pastor is about truth and helping without conditions attached, the politician is not.

Yes, one stands for what it believes in and follows by it no matter what

Our preacher is honest, politicians can't be trusted

Yes, in some ways, but they should be the same leading by example, God fearing, helping God's people, bringing people together; not separating them

Yes, politicians go out and have selfish gain, the pastor lifts up God

Yes, there is a difference

Yes, a big difference

Yes, the pastor of Mt. Olive is a strong leader and on the battlefield working for the Master. The local politicians in Robinsonville talk a good game, but can't back it up. They are on the battlefield for themselves

Yes, the politician is soliciting votes. The pastor is soliciting people to come to God

Yes, the pastor is called and held accountable to God, the politician is called and held accountable to the people

13. Have you ever participated in a protest? Explain.

No, not really

No, I haven't

I have never participated in a protest

No, I have not participated

No, I just haven't

Yes, I have participated in a protest

Yes, orally

Yes, not openly but if I am against something, I stand on what I believe

No, I haven't, not even on the job. I've always left it up to others to do it; I just want things to happen

No, but I recently decided to work

14. Do you have any involvement with organization that has a voice within the community?

No, not really

No, I don't

Yes, involvement within my church

No, I haven't had any involvement

Yes!

Yes, the church

Yes, I have involvement with the church

Yes, I do

Yes, we change policy

Yes, involvement with my church

15. As a member of Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church, what can you do to create social change within the Tunica County community? Explain

I'm not sure what I could do at this point

Work with the church

I will work with the church

I'm not sure what I could do at this present time, but would like to become more involved in the church

I will speak out!

I gave up on social change a long time ago, because social change does not happen

I will go back to community meetings

I will become more involve in working in the church

I can be a support to people

I will work hard in the church

## **APPENDIX C**

### **SERMON ONE**

## Do not keep quiet

Luke 19:1-10 (NRSV)

*1 He entered Jericho and was passing through it.*

*2 A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was rich.*

*3 He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature.*

*4 So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way.*

*5 When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today."*

*6 So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him.*

*7 All who saw it began to grumble and said, "He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner."*

*8 Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much."*

*9 Then Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham."*

*10 For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost."*

Here we are at Mt. Olive Baptist Church. It is a wonderful place. God has been real good to us. God has healed us and blessed us. God has brought us from a mighty long way.

Let us allow the Holy Spirit the pleasure of guiding us through this text today. Let us travel along this Jericho road. Zacchaeus, the chief tax collector, is up in a tree. He wanted to see this man named Jesus. Zacchaeus was short in stature and wanted a good view. While traveling Jesus noticed Zachaeus up in the tree and called him down.

This meeting was the beginning to a wonderful relationship between Jesus and Zacchaeus. Let us imagine how people began to talk and whisper. Why would Jesus want a relationship with this sinner man?



It was because of Zacchaeus profession that the people assumed the worst. God saw his heart and blessed him anyway. God can bless us even in the midst of our enemies.

Jesus blessed Zacchaeus that day with salvation. Jesus is something else. He is more than you can image or think. He blesses, He heals, and He delivers.

Jesus was an awesome speaker. Right after Jesus received Zachaeus. Jesus shared a parable of money usage. The theme could have been “what to do with what God has already given.” This was powerful because some of us always want more. We never have enough of anything. What has God already given? Look at the gift that God has already given.

The blessings of God are unfolding before our very eyes. Let us learn to serve God in and out of season. Let us learn to worship God in good and in bad. Let us get excited about the blessing. Let us not forget the God that has given us so many blessing. Let us not forget who led us out of the wilderness.

They come to church with all our rules and guidelines but can not give God praise. Yes, some of us continue to play the church game. They come because that what they are expected to do but leave empty.

Now we are on our way to Jerusalem. We are on this hill, Mt. Olive. Jesus sent two brothers, fellow disciples to get a colt. Jesus shares with the disciples that the day will come that He would have to leave them, but the disciples are never ready for that day. They do not want Him to go. He told them that everything written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. Jesus told them that He will be handed over to the

gentiles. They will mock Him, insult Him, spit on Him, flog Him and kill Him. On the third day, He will rise again, but the disciples were not ready to hear that news.

But still, they brought the colt back. At the triumphal entry Jesus is sitting on that colt. He is the master teacher. As Jesus enters, people began to spread coats on the road. When Jesus came near the place where the road goes down the Mt. Olive all of us began to joyfully praise God in loud voices. They were free to worship God. They have already seen the miracles that Jesus had performed. They are happy to see Jesus. People began to shout so hard and so loud that some got upset. It didn't matter; some were happy and understood the word of Psalm 100.

*Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing. Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves, we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting: and his truth endures to all generations.*

They began to shout: Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord. Peace in heaven and glory in the highest. They just kept on praising the Lord. What a wonderful Lord, He is.

Then some of the Pharisees said to Jesus, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples!" They are too loud. It doesn't take all of that. They are just putting on a show. The Holy Spirit does not move like that. Tell them to shut up. Jesus came to our rescue again and said "if

*they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.”* You can not see what they are seeing. You don’t know like they know what the Lord had done.

As Jesus approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, *“If you, even you had only known on this day what would bring you peace-but now it is hidden from your eyes. But the day is coming when every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that He is Lord”*.

The story is not over yet. After all the lies, the backbiting, the deceit, they thought that it was over for Jesus. It even got worst. They crucified Him. It was terrible. It was not over.

They treated Jesus like a criminal. They nailed Him to a cross. Even when He died on that cross, they pierced Him in His side. It was not over.

Some good hearted person asked for the body of Jesus in order to give him a final resting place. They took Jesus’ body and placed it in a tomb. It was not over yet.

Some of the sisters went to embalm his body but when they got there the body was gone. Jesus got up with all power, just like he said he would. It is not over yet. We will shout it to the high heaven. We will shout until we can’t shout any longer. We got something to shout about. If you knew how good God has been to me you would shout too. The purpose of this shout is that you need to know that God is a good God. And we are not ashamed of the Gospel of peace.

## **APPENDIX D**

### **SERMON TWO**

## Free to be Free

### Luke 13:10-17

*10 Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath.*

*11 And just then there appeared a woman with a spirit that had crippled her for eighteen years. She was bent over and was quite unable to stand up straight.*

*12 When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, "Woman, you are set free from your ailment."*

*13 When he laid his hands on her, immediately she stood up straight and began praising God.*

*14 But the leaders of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had cured on the Sabbath, kept saying to the crowd, "There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be cured, and not on the Sabbath day."*

*15 But the Lord answered him and said, "you hypocrites! Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger, and lead it away to give it water?"*

*16 And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen long years, be set free from this bondage on the Sabbath day?"*

*17 When he said this, all his opponents were put to shame; and the entire crowd was rejoicing at all the wonderful things that he was doing.*

There is a time is when having freedom is not really freedom. Some of us have been given the false idea of what freedom is all about. On July 4, 1776, fifty-six men signed the Declaration of Independence. In this document it stated that all humankind were created equal and are given certain unalienable rights. And among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Now this document did not include African-American at all but it was in the Constitution.

Today, our text finds us in a similar situation. The Pharisees felt that they had special restrictions on the blessings of God. They wanted to tell God when and who to bless. They were the one and only. Today some people think that God loves one more than the other. They think that God only blesses a certain group of people, and everybody else is not worthy. They really

believe that God only blesses people based on race, skin complexion, gender, and bank accounts. They think that God will only bless those in a certain church. They think God only blesses people that look like them. The word of God says that God is no respecter of person. The rain falls on the just and unjust.

Some see things that are wrong and call them right. All forms of discrimination practice are wrong. Racism, sexism, classism are among many other discriminating practice going on in America today. The days of the holocaust are remembered all over, but not many recognize the pain and agony of the days of slavery. In America today, people are yet suffering from the days of slavery. Some would say America has passed that and let it rest; that day is over. How can they say it is over when people are suffering from poor health care, poor education and poor employment? How can they say people need to get over it when in the small community Tunica County the demons of diabetes, cancer, heart disease and AIDS has raised its ugly head? They can not get over it, and they have know desire to stop talking about it.

God is looking for somebody to stand on his word and not be afraid. Somebody got to speak up. People need to be free from these burdens of life and the only way to deal with it is the true word of God.

The story goes that on Sabbath day, Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues, and there was a woman that had been crippled by a spirit for eighteen years. She was so crippled that she was bent over and could not straighten up at all. When Jesus saw her, he called her forward and said to her, "*Woman, you are set free from your infirmity.*" Then he put his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God.

Now this did not set too well with the church people, the synagogue official. The text said

they became indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath. They began to talk to the crowd saying *“There are six days for work; so come and be healed on those days, not on the Sabbath.”*

Everyday language for us, the deacon of the church said, there are six days that Jesus could do that work, why did He have to do it on today?

They think that they already know Jesus, but not really. They have no real compassion for the sick. The call to have compassion is important all the time. The synagogue leader is so bound up in his rules that he can not rejoice in the blessing of deliverance that has taken place. Jesus just blessed this woman and church leader is concerned about when it is done.

That is not the only debate going on. The issue is concerning Jesus' authority bound up in this event. It could be that he did not realize that Jesus had the authority to heal. God has already endorsed that authority even on the Sabbath. God is at work through Jesus and this whole event reinforces the authority and power of Jesus.

But yet some people are so hardhearted. It is really sad to sit and think about how can someone hate another because of the color of their skin? How can anyone hate another because of where a person lives, what they drive, or even what a person wears? It seems so simple, but that is Satan way. Satan messes with the mind. Jesus has repeatedly warned the Jewish leadership and his generation about the risk of rejecting him. He continues to reinforce his claim, but many keep on challenging what he does. They even stretch the “no labor law” on the Sabbath to try to discredit him. It is in the healing process that God cast a vote for the challenged teacher.

They have to got choose the side of Jesus regardless of our situation is they want salvation. Jesus is on the side of God and God is on Jesus side. Whose side are they on?

This sickness is not just that, it is more. The word says that we wrestle not against flesh

and blood but wickedness in high places. These demons must go in the name of Jesus.

Jesus has come to free us from the prison of Satan grip. The woman has been shackled by a physical condition, but Satan presence is also manifest in this situation. He can damage both physically and emotionally causing us to depend on substances or behaviors that are compulsive and destructive. Whatever it is, Jesus' deliverance is designed to free us up to relate to him in a way that enables us to shed the limitations Satan sometimes chains us with.

As John 9 shows, not every illness or debilitation is tied to Satan; but when he strikes, we need to be assured that in God we can face and overcome whatever comes, regardless of the physical outcome. Such conditions may be reversed suddenly or over time, or transcended in the life to come, but the picture of physical deliverance here serves notice that deliverance is possible through Jesus.

Even after Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, that was to set all the slaves free, some people never got that message. Even after the Voting Rights Act and the Human Rights Bill were signed and made law, some never got the message.

Today, remember that they got the word and the word of God says that they are set free from your infirmity. Because they are free they have the responsibility of freeing others. It is our responsibility to go and tell a dying world about a living Savior. It is our responsibility to tell Pharaoh to let our people go. It is our responsibility to tell each other that we do not have to be like crabs stepping on each other trying to get out of the bucket. If we seek God first, it will happen.



## **APPENDIX E**

### **SERMON THREE**

## The Power of a Shout

### Mark 10: 46-52

*46 Then they came to Jericho. As he and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timacus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside.*

*47 When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"*

*48 Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"*

*49 Jesus stood still and said, "Call him here." And they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take heart; get up, he is calling you."*

*50 So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus.*

*51 Then Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" The blind man said to him, "My teacher, let me see again."*

*52 Jesus said to him, "Go; your faith has made you well," Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.*

The title of the subject today came while watching a basketball game it is *The Power of a Shout*.

In the church of today there are many things. It is as if the church of today is emulating the world rather than the world emulating the church. Some leaders of the church believe that if the church is to survive and become more important to society, its main purpose is to side with the world rather than God.

This story today is centered along the road of Jericho. Sitting on the side of the road was a blind man that has been reduced to a beggar status. His name was Bartimaeus. In the ancient world a man in this condition was totally dependent on others for charity and for guidance and protection.

The crowd treated him as if he was nothing. When he cried out to Jesus, they tried to make him shut up. They felt that the man was making a fool out of himself. It might have

appeared that he was loud and aloof. The crowd wanted him to shut up and go somewhere else.

Take note that they did not bring this blind man to Jesus. He was alone with no support. The crowd could have figured that Jesus was too important to deal with this blind man.

The blind man, Bartimaeus would not be put off by the reaction from the crowd. He was not bothered by the talk. He got louder and began to yell more desperately. “Jesus, thy Son of David, have mercy on me.” Some folk have no idea what it is to have a real need. The crowd tried to make the man stop shouting, but he just wouldn’t keep quiet. When a person has done all they know to do, when a person have gone the last mile of the way, when they do not have anything else to lose. That is when they give it all to Jesus.

Rather than lead the blind man to Jesus they tried to make him shut up. This man was different from the crowd. Jesus stopped for this man, because this man knew how to cry out.

No one is too small or insignificant for Jesus to command His attention. Look at the leper, a woman with a hemorrhage, little children, and now a blind beggar all received Jesus’ care.

Somehow, blind Bartimaeus is able to see within his spirit that this man, Jesus, is passing by. For Bartimaeus, Jesus is more than some prophet or miracle worker. So he cries out to him as the “Son of David”. This cry is powerful and continues to set the stage for a revolution. Change is taking place. Jesus expresses his royal authority in works of healing and mercy for the outcast and downtrodden. This Son of David hears the cries of the oppressed, gives sight to the blind, and brings blessing and peace. That’s a real revolution.

Be quiet Bartimaeus. Too late, Jesus already heard him. Jesus stops and says, “Call him”.

They said to the blind man, “Cheer up! On your feet! He’s calling us.” Bartimaeus jumped on his feet and hurried to Jesus, no hesitation at all. He left what he had behind. Then Jesus asked him, “*What do you want me to do for you?*”

Now this may seem odd, why would Jesus ask a blind man a question like that? We have heard this question before when Jesus asked the disciples, James and John the same question. Now when we call on the name of Jesus we need to make sure we know what it is that we want Him to do for us.

Bartimaeus’ answer was, “I want to see.” He believed that Jesus was able to fulfill his request and give him sight. The disciples’ answer to this question is telling: they want to sit on thrones with Jesus and reign with him in triumph. Bartimaeus sits in the dust, makes no demand for glory, but cries out from his wretched poverty; he only wants to see. The disciples see Jesus as a Messiah who will bring them mastery and glory; but Bartimaeus sees Jesus as the Son of David who brings him healing and sight. Jesus cannot grant the disciples’ request for power, but he can grant a blind man’s request for vision. This is transformational faith.

Jesus can heal physical blindness and spiritual blindness. Bartimaeus voices what every disciple should want and that is to be able to see. Discipleship is opened to all who identify with Jesus in faith. It is putting your faith in Jesus and following him.

Bartimaeus’ healing gives us a reason to shout. We should shout of the goodness of the Lord. Church is not a place to sit and be important. It is a place where one can glorify God in the highest. It is a place where one can cast all its cares on the Lord. To go from blindness to sight is truly a conversion experience. It is nothing but amazing grace.

This blind man experience was very similar to the African American encounter with

internal oppression and racism. The healing grace that they received in their lives was powerful. They knew what it felt like to sit figuratively in the dust of injustice, a beggar for grace, calling out desperately for help and shouting and singing *I am not going to let nobody turn me around*. This song gave them strength to move forward. When others tried to drown out their cries or tried to silence them with dogs, water holes, even the threat of death. They knew what it was like to learn that Jesus cared-enough to hear the cries above the agony in the crowd, to stop, and to extend the call that gladdens the heart.

We must learn to shout in the midst of our storms while receiving the blessing. Here are way to deal with healing process.

1) Healing does not always come easily for those whom Jesus heals. Before Bartimaeus receives healing from Jesus, he must overcome the crowd determination to throttle his cries for help. He is persistent in calling out Jesus name until he hears Jesus call out his own name. That dogged determination is how the Syrophoenician woman received her blessing. She would not give up hope. Her daughter was ill. Even though she was not a Jew and Jesus initially rebuffed her, she would not give up. Jairus must ignore the mockery of the mourners that Jesus can do nothing for his dead child. Friends must force a way through a crowd and a roof to bring their paralyzed companion to Jesus. The leper and the woman with the flow of blood must disregard laws that would stop them from having contact with Jesus to receive his help. A desperate father must overcome his doubt that Jesus can do anything to help his tormented son when the disciples had already failed. Healing comes to those who are persistent and are not quickly discouraged by whatever hurdles others may place in their way.

2) If healing requires persistence, one must be intentional in coming to Jesus for relief. Bartimaues cried out to Jesus because he believed that he would have mercy on him and could give him his sight. The question that Jesus presented was not out of place. The Pharisees wanted to trap Jesus. The rich man wanted eternal security at minimum cost. James and John wanted to be the top officials in the kingdom bureaucracy. A blind beggar might only want money, but Bartimaeus wanted to see again.

The crowd negative reactions to the blind man cry for help raise the issue of our compassion for those in need. The community may want to silence embarrassing cries that serve to accentuate the helplessness of those whom they have failed to help. Cries of desperation make most people uncomfortable, particularly when they come from our midst. The sad thing is that churches have often turned their backs on those with disabilities, made no effort to reach them, and pretended that they did not exist.

The church, if it is to be the church of Jesus Christ, can never be like the crowds that try to repress the urgent yells of those who desperately need help or try to cover up the tragedies that strike people's lives. Like Jesus, we must be willing to listen, to stop, and to respond.

## **APPENDIX F**

### **SERMON FOUR**

## Dealing with the Spirit of Hate

John 7:6-7

*6 Jesus said to them, "My time has not yet come, but your time is always here.  
7 The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify against it that its works are evil*

According to John 7: 1-9; Jesus went around in Galilee, purposely staying away from Judea because the Jews there were waiting to take his life. It is important to deal with hate as soon as it came to mind. Many of us become that which we despise in others. Some become what Paulo Freire describes in "Pedagogy of the Oppressed", a situation where those struggling against oppression often end up adapting values and strategies of their oppressor, becoming themselves oppressors or sub-oppressors. Though they may be aware of being dominated, yet "their perception of themselves as opposites of their oppressor does not yet signify engagement in a struggle to overcome the contradiction; the one pole aspires not to liberation, but to identification with its opposite pole".<sup>1</sup>

If the world hates them simply because they are doing the work of the Lord, keep in mind that it hated Jesus first. It was the message of Jesus to set the captive free. It is our responsibility to take a stand against social ills and injustices in this community. A health care crisis is going on in our community today. Diabetes, heart disease and cancer and even the mental health issues are at an all time high. Yet, somehow political power can not seem to get a local hospital. The powers that be are mildly concern about these issues. Getting past the hating of action and not the

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<sup>1</sup>Freire, Paulo *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York, NY: Continuum, 1992), 30.



people themselves is our goal?

People want deliverance from their sins and healing for their bodies but the process of accepting and receiving Jesus totally is far-fetched. Jesus was and is all about justice and love? The people hated Jesus and wanted to kill him because of what He stood for. His brother had a case of hater-ism trying to convince Jesus to go to the feast because they did not believe in Jesus. Our hatred for people was unfounded. We sometimes get caught up in the emotion of jealousy of speech in saying “They think they are something”.

Have they had a cup of hater-ade this morning? This is how to determine if someone has had at least a cup of hater-ade. If they are always talking about what someone has, they have been drinking that hater-ade.

If they take no responsibilities for their action, they have been drinking hater-ade. If they say, look at them they think that they are something, they have been drinking that hater-ade. They walk by people and roll their eyes and the spirit of jealousy comes upon them, they have been drinking that hater-ade. They share untruths concerning others all the while not able to receive the blessing of God for themselves; they have been drinking that hater-ade.

They see God blessing others with the power to speak and sing, yet they go about trying to discredit them by saying things like, anybody can do that. They have been drinking that hater-ade.

Some would call that low-self esteem, but today let us call it like it is pure “hater-ism”. It is always someone else fault for their being in the shape that they are in. They play the blame game. Many have had the some great opportunities but did not desire to do better. Though race is yet an issue in our community, it is not always the singular problem. If they were darker or

lighter, life would be so much easier they say. If their hair was shorter or longer, they would look so much better. If, if, if.

In his book, *Strength to Love*, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., writes that hatred and bitterness can never cure the disease of fear; only love can do that. Hatred paralyzes life; love releases it. Hatred confuses life; love harmonizes it. Hatred darkens life; love illuminates it.

When it is finish and all the complaining is done, confessing to God that he has been good to us is part of the solution. Many African Americans have lost their lives due to this thing call hate. It was not right. Some people even sat on the sidelines saying that God will take care of it. We must agree that God will take care of it through the power in which God has given us. God has given us the power to speak against the trick of the enemy. Faith in God will give us that power to tread over the enemy.

Yes, there are a lot of things wrong in our society. The fight against the demon of racism, classism, sexism and many other “isms”, but yet continues but we can not give up.

It is important for us to conquer this demon in order to move to the level in which God has for us. Anything that keeps us separated from the love God is a demon.

It is very difficult to love someone that abuses and uses all manner of evil against people. It is difficult to love someone that beats people. It is very difficult to love someone that disrespects people and treats people inhumanely. It is difficult to love a person that raped has raped many. It is difficult to love when murder has been committed on a family member. Yes, it is very difficult to love when a people have been drugged through this life as a filthy rag.

In Proverbs 10:12, *Hatred stirs up dissension, but love covers over all wrongs*. Love covers a multitude of sins, including hate.

In order to conquer this demon of hate we must receive the love of God in Christ Jesus. It was because of Him that our sins are forgiven. Let us find that love that God has given within and stand in the gap for someone else. God loved us so much that God gave His only son for our very lives. John 15:12-13, *“My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this that he lay down his life for his friends”*.

Jesus said it plainly even in the midst of his enemy, hanging on the cross. He said “Father forgive them.” Forgiveness is a great part of this conquering goal. When standing in the midst of the enemy and fighting with the faith in God, the battle is already been won. God is on our side. As believers we do not fight with the same weapons that the evil one has fought with but by putting on the whole armor of God. The bible says that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty for pulling down the strong hold of racism. Even if some of us die we will stand for justice and equality. Death is not the end; it is just the beginning. All are alive when standing for justice. 2 Corinthians 5 states it best in *For we know that when this earthly tent we live in is taken down-when we die and leave these bodies- we will have a home in heaven, an eternal body made for us by God himself and not by human hands*.

God is on our side. Even if some have been oppressed and downtrodden, God is on our side.

## **APPENDIX G**

### **SERMON FIVE**

## Healing Through Forgiveness

*Luke 23:34 Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.*

One of the ways in which we experience divine love is through forgiveness. It is our belief that true and lasting peace of mind and well-being are maintained when we learn to forgive. The blessing of forgiveness heals any sense of separation between us and others.

Even when some feel that the pain is so deep they must learn to forgive. They only prolong the suffering and pain by continuing to focus on what someone else has done. In becoming willing to forgive, freedom is given from the bondage of an unforgiving attitude. It is at that point that divine love of God flows through us unhindered.

It takes too much energy to hold on to that stuff. Energy that once was used to maintain an unmoving stance is transformed into productive, constructive, loving energy. Energy is made manifest as health on every level, abundance in all our affairs, and wisdom in all our relationships. When letting go one can become open to the blessing of God. That goal is freedom in God to receive new life. Colossians 3:12 and 13 states that *“As God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other, just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive”*. Learning as God’s chosen people is a trait to forgive others.

Unforgiveness blocks the healing love of the Lord from entering. It is not that people do not pray the right prayer, not that they do not have faith, but because they do not understand the

necessity of forgiveness. We love God. Some have been in the church all their lives, but learning to forgive was never taught. As in Roman 10:2 the text says that *"I can testify that they have a zeal for God, not according to knowledge."* As we began to understand more about God, the Holy Spirit gives us a revelation of God even concerning freedom in life. Everything that is needed can be found in the word of God.

When forgiveness happens a big task has been accomplished. Those who do this bless themselves. They release themselves and healing takes place. The hurt and pain of bad memories of the past can be discovered and dealt with. They discover humility. They rid themselves of the sin of pride, which is one of the biggest obstacles to any healing.

When forgiveness is communicated, it can heal others. It can teach others to forgive. It teaches others humility. A big load is lifted off the heavy heart. When learning to cast all our cares on God because God cares for us, they are better people. They start with a fresh clean heart to welcome the love of the Lord to flow in. Everyone benefits. It becomes contagious and more people discover the ability to love unconditionally and experience the true meaning of joy.

Total forgiveness means forgiving and forgetting. When this happens they not only destroy the picture and but also the negative. They totally let go of the hurt.

When they cannot forgive or ask for forgiveness, they are in bondage. God wants us free. It is our responsibility to free the person that was hurt from the bondage and communicate our sincere desire for forgiveness. Ask that person to forgive with all humility. Forgiveness is bitterness replaced with compassion and love.

Let us seek the help of the Holy Spirit to heal that part of us that hurt others. We need the

Holy Spirit to melt away our pride and put in our hearts the desire and ability to forgive. There is a need for strength and boldness to communicate this desire to God. All of us need the Holy Spirit to bring to our awareness to the people hurt by us and the people who hurt us.

Forgiveness is needed in our world. Forgiveness in our families is needed. Forgiveness in our heart is needed. Many people need someone to apologize for the way African Americans were treated in America. The pain and agony of slavery endured continue to perpetrate the young and old. This pain raises its ugly head in the form of racism. To simply apologize is a step forward and a powerful act. True reconciliation is needed today. True repentance is needed today.

The one thing that can give us peace in the midst of all this is the love of God. Learning to remember Jesus Christ giving His life on the cross for us. Before He died, Jesus said to God, *"Father forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing."* (Luke 23:34)

The sooner forgiveness happens the sooner healing takes place. The key to true forgiveness is found in God. The hurt from our past can become a constant part in our lives if we allow it.

Total forgiveness means being able to ask for forgiveness even from those who hurt us. Once we communicate this forgiveness to others healing can take place. The Holy Spirit will take the pain away and heal our hearts.

*"And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."* (Matthew 6:12)

We can ask God to forgive us through the sacrament of reconciliation.

*"Set your heart on His kingdom first, and on His righteousness, and all these other things will be given to you as well". (Mat 6:33)*

Jesus, through the power of the Holy Spirit, can give us the memory of those that we have hurt in our past. Every hurt that has ever been done God can heal it. Every hurt God can heal that too. All the relationships that have been damaged in our whole life, God can heal that.

Even if he or she needs to go to a person because they are still suffering God can give the strength to seek forgiveness from that person. Forgiveness is a choice. That is what the cross is all about, Forgiveness. Let us look toward Calvary, today. Remember the awesome price Jesus paid for our sins.



## **APPENDIX H**

### **SERMON RESPONSE SURVEY**

Sermon Response Survey  
Rev. Henry I. Hargrow, Jr.

1. What was your reaction to the sermon today?

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2. Did you feel inspired? If so, how?

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3. Did you feel empowered? If so how?

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4. What actions did the sermon prompt you to want to take?

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5. How can our church, community and you as an individual address these actions?

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## **APPENDIX I**

### **COMMUNITY LEADERS INTERVIEW**

**Community Leaders Interview**

Please complete and return as soon as possible.

1. What is the role of a leader in the community?

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2. What is the difference between the leader in the church and the leader in the community? Explain.

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3. What are you doing to affect positive change within this community? Explain

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## APPENDIX J

### FLYER

Please join the  
***Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church***  
(Robinsonville)

***Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.***  
Mu Lambda Lambda Chapter

with the help and support of

***Tunica County Circuit Clerk Office***  
(Mrs. Sharon Granberry Reynolds)

***Tunica County Democrat Party***

In sponsoring

***Voters Registration Drive***  
***and***  
***Voters Demonstration***  
(New voting machine)

This event will take place  
**Saturday, April 8, 2006**  
**10:00 a.m.**

at

***Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church***  
***Rev. Henry I. Hargrow, Jr., Pastor***  
***5434 Casino Resort Blvd***  
***Tunica Resort, MS 38664***  
***(662) 363-2794***

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